ANTHEM SCREEN SPOTLIGHT

WEDNESDAY

THE ESSENTIAL FAN GUIDE

100% UNOFFICIAL

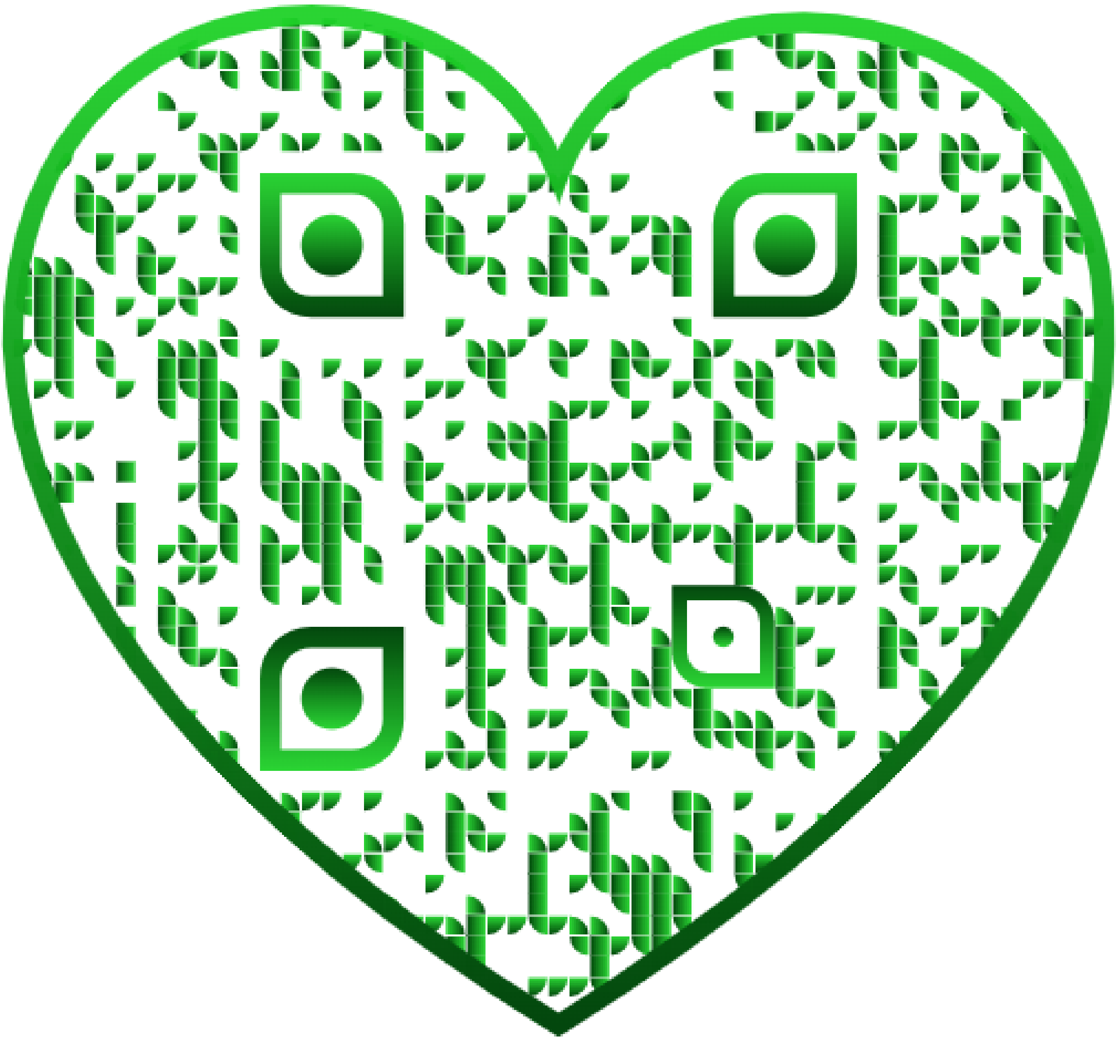
THE INSIDE STORY ON THE KOOKIEST CULT TV SERIES

WEDNESDAY THROUGH THE YEARS

INSIDE THE MIND OF TIM BURTON

BEST GOTHIC HORROR MOVIES

PLUS EPISODE DEEP DIVES ◆ MEET THE FAMILY ◆ SEASON 2 CREEPY PREVIEW



NETFLIX

WELCOME

As the gates of Nevermore Academy creak open once again, fans around the world are preparing for the return of the dark, delightfully twisted world of *Wednesday*. After the huge success of its first season, the iconic Addams Family daughter is back for a highly anticipated second series.

In this special magazine we dive deep into the series, look at what we can expect from season two, profile its cast and creators and take a closer look at how *Wednesday* has redefined the modern gothic genre for a new generation.

Let the mystery, mayhem and macabre continue.

Christian Guiltenane

CHRISTIAN GUILTENANE, EDITOR

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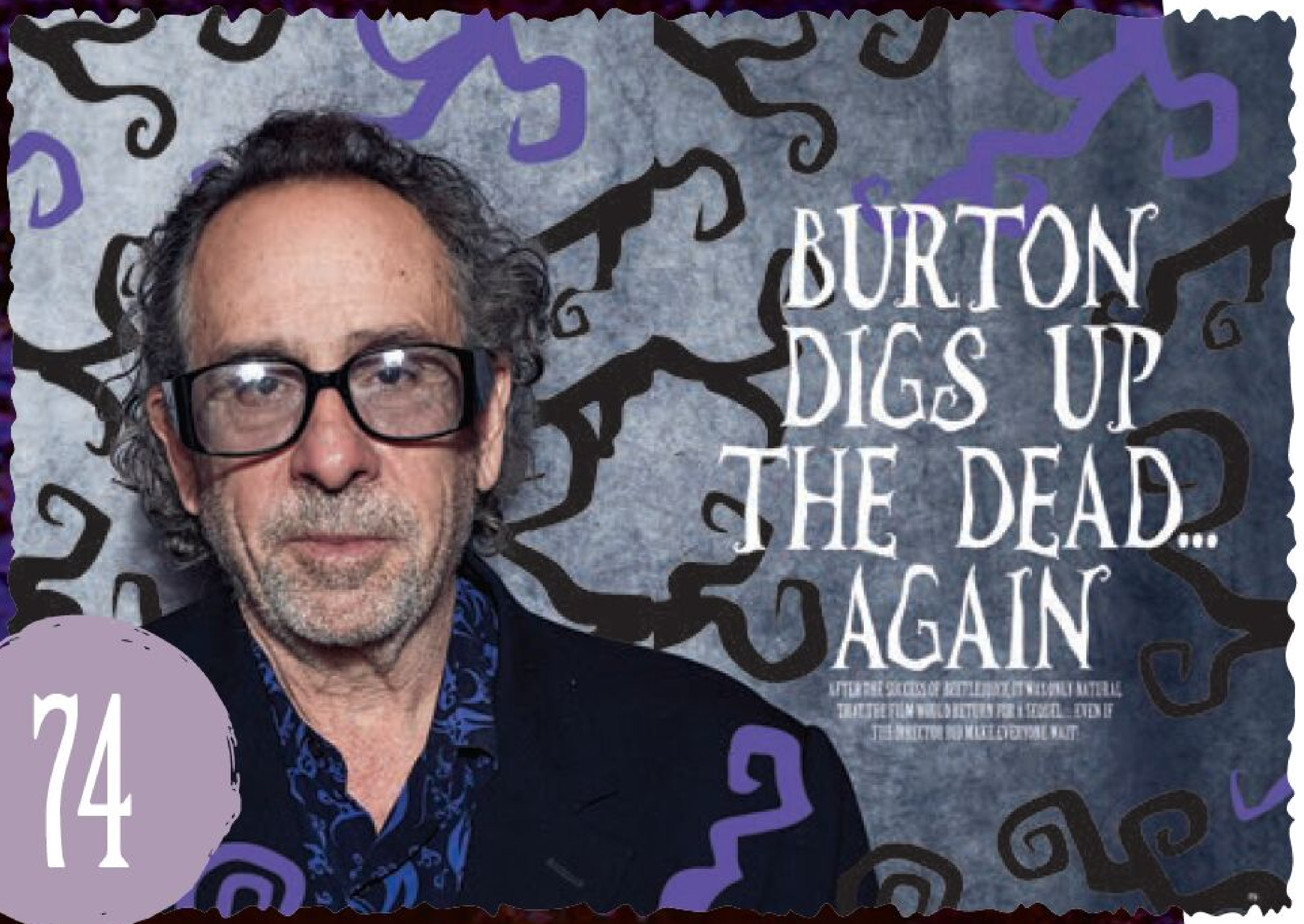
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SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES
anthem.subscribeonline.co.uk
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Calls to 0844 numbers cost 7 pence per minute plus your phone company's access charge.

ANTHEM PUBLISHING PPA

*Established 2002 – founding directors:
Paul Pettengale, Simon Lewis, Jon Bickley*

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Bath BA2 4JT
+44 (0) 1225 489 984**

FSC www.fsc.org MIX Paper from responsible sources FSC® C013869

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THEY'RE CREEPY
AND THEY'RE KOOKY,
MYSTERIOUS AND SPOOKY,
THEY'RE ALTOGETHER OOKY,

THE ADDAMS FAMILY

DIM THE LIGHTS AND DON YOUR DARKEST ATTIRE – *WEDNESDAY* IS BACK!

Although getting to play goth gal Wednesday in the TV series of the same name was another dream come true for Jenna Ortega, she was initially hesitant to say yes to it. She'd finally broken into movies. "So the idea of jumping onto another show, when I had done so much TV already, was something I didn't necessary want," she admitted. "My goal has always been film, so I was trying to focus on that."

What changed her mind? "This was a character that was so legendary and so badass, and it's also the most well-known role I've ever taken."

Looking back on her time on *Stuck In The Middle*, she recalled of her character Harley Diaz: "I referred to myself as 'the Wednesday of the family' because there were seven kids and I was in the middle. I remember telling my mom at the time: 'Oh my God, I'd love to play Wednesday Addams,' but when would that opportunity ever come? And then it came."

UNCLE FESTER FRED ARMISEN

Fred Armisen returns as Uncle Fester, the eccentric and lovable uncle of Wednesday. In season two, Uncle Fester's knowledge of the Dark Arts becomes crucial as the family faces new supernatural challenges. Armisen has embraced the character's quirks while filming, noting: "I had no eyebrows... it was prosthetics over my eyebrows to give me that look."

PUGSLEY ADDAMS ISAAC ORDONEZ

Isaac Ordonez portrays Pugsley Addams, Wednesday's younger brother. In season two, Pugsley's character is set to gain more prominence in the show, with his own storyline unfolding. Ordonez has expressed his excitement for the expanded role, stating: "I'm thrilled to explore Pugsley's character more deeply this season."

Legendary director Tim Burton was on board to executive produce *Wednesday* and direct the first four episodes. Jenna was filming *X* in New Zealand when she heard Burton wanted to talk to her about her playing the lead. "And you can't really pass up the opportunity to talk to someone like Tim," she said of her decision to break her no-more-TV rule. "I had just done a whole night shoot and I had cuts and prosthetics all over my face. I got on the phone with Tim and he just laughed. We kept talking and talking and eventually I realised, this is something that could be really interesting to be a part of."

Jenna underwent what she called "the most physical transformation I've ever done" to prepare for the show, dyeing her hair black and practising how to keep an intimidatingly straight face. She also learned to play the cello and how to speak German, as well as mastering Wednesday's deadpan delivery. As if all that wasn't enough, she also had canoeing, fencing and archery lessons.

Filming began in September 2021 in and around the small Romanian mountain town of Buşteni, which is usually home to about 8,300 inhabitants. The cast and crew increased that number considerably.

Interviewed during what she called an intense seven-month schedule, the show's star reckoned: "It's been quite an insane experience. I've been lucky enough to get the opportunity to work with an iconic director who just so happens to be one of the sweetest directors I've worked with and also the most detail-oriented. To step into the shoes of somebody who's a bit more eccentric and frightening has been really exciting for me and definitely a challenge – especially with such a beloved character. I really want to take care of her and do her justice." ▶

WEDNESDAY ADDAMS JENNA ORTEGA

Jenna Ortega reprises her role as the sardonic and sharp-witted Wednesday Addams. And, this time around, she not only stars but also serves as a producer, allowing her greater creative influence over the series. In season two, the series shifts its focus towards darker, more supernatural elements, moving away from romantic subplots. Ortega has expressed her enthusiasm for this direction, stating: "I think we want to lean into the horror aspect of the show a little bit more, ditching any romantic love interest for Wednesday."

MORTICIA ADDAMS

CATHERINE ZETA JONES

Catherine Zeta Jones returns as Morticia Addams, Wednesday's glamorous and enigmatic mother. In season two, Morticia's psychic abilities and her past at Nevermore Academy come to the forefront. The Welsh actress has emphasised the importance of portraying Morticia as a multifaceted character, noting: "I didn't want to play her as a Halloween-costumed caricature; I wanted to find the root of her." Speaking about working with Jenna, Catherine added: "She's in literally every scene, and she comes prepared with ideas, she's creative and she's fun. It really is a dream. Now I get why Tim [Burton] said Jenna's special. She really is."

GOMEZ ADDAMS

LUIS GUZMÁN

Luis Guzmán returns as the devoted patriarch of the family. In season two, Gomez's mysterious past and connections to the town of Jericho are explored. Speaking about working with Catherine Zeta Jones, he said: "It was great. I thought we had a really good bond with each other. She's beautiful – it goes without saying. I was just honoured to be her Gomez, just as she was honoured to be my Morticia." He also lifted the lid on private meetings to align their portrayal of the love-struck couple: "Once we had that discussion and we reached an understanding and level of comfortability with each other, it was like: 'Okay, we're off and running.'"

As the cast and creatives hit the promotional trail just before all eight episodes dropped on Netflix on November 23 2022, did Ortega feel Wednesday was a heroine for today? "A little bit, but I think she always has been and always will be. She's a really strong character and I think everyone relates to her, which is a really powerful quality to possess, especially in a comedic character."

Does Wednesday have a heart underneath that cold exterior? "I think she does, yes. Is it beating? I couldn't tell you, but I think there has to be remnants of something there because there's no other reason why she would be so passionate about things like her family or investigating the murder."

Gwendoline Christie, who plays Larissa Weems, was impressed by what Ortega brought to the show. "She has an inquisitive nature," the *Game Of Thrones* star observed. "It almost feels like a paradox in her character, where she seems to consume life seriously but she also appreciates all of its absurdity, and she has this un-abandoned imagination alongside of it."

And she felt they made worthy adversaries. "Wednesday Addams is mercurial, iron-willed and unafraid to say exactly what she thinks and how she sees situations. She is happy to confront anybody. She's happy to fight anybody, so they really are a match. They come together in a conflicted, strange and frankly weird way that moves across the spectrum from hatred all the way up to love and back again."

Wednesday also has a fractious relationship with her mum, but Ortega had nothing but admiration for her co-star Catherine Zeta Jones. "Catherine's such a goofball. I think her humour is underrated. She was really fun to work with. She was like the life of the party when she came on set. Obviously she's immensely talented so it was cool to have the opportunity to work with her."

The young star was just as buzzed to be working with veteran director Tim Burton. "He put me at ease. He was definitely one of my rocks on that set in terms of when he hires an actor he completely trusts them. He always asked for my opinion and I grew to become very protective of the character because I didn't want her to be like every other teenage girl. It's hard when you have things like boys pursuing her or going to school dances and just being in that environment."

And Burton welcomed her input, she recalls: "It was really wonderful

FEATURE BY NANCY BROWN, SIMON BUTTON; PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX

when Tim would call me to his trailer in the morning and say: 'What lines do you want to take out? What do you want to keep in? What would you like to say instead?' He was always interested in what I had to say or would always ask for my approval. I trust him completely. He's done incredible work so I was a bit in awe of that quality. He's very sweet and very respectful, and it was definitely one of my favourite experiences with a director."

Once the show aired, it was clear that all of Jenna's input – along with the hard work of her castmates, Burton, guest directors on episodes five to eight and all of the crew – had paid off. The reviews were largely positive, with *The Wall Street Journal* calling it "often delightful, despite its deliberate darkness" and *The Guardian* hailing its "wit, charm and propulsive energy". In other reviews, Ortega was singled out for her charisma.

Ortega was nominated for a Golden Globe and a Screen Actors Guild Award and was also shortlisted for a Primetime Emmy as Outstanding Lead Actress In A Comedy Series, making her the second-youngest performer ever to be up for the trophy.

The show was a massive hit, debuting at number one on Netflix in more than 80 countries. It broke records for the most hours viewed in a week on the streaming platform. Within three weeks it had become Netflix's second most-watched English-language show ever after the serial killer drama *Dahmer*.

Photos of Addams-inspired looks flooded social media. "I've always respected goth culture," Jenna responded. "I've always had a darker sense of humour but I never felt like I was able to express that. Now I feel like I can embrace those qualities in myself."

The show's success meant that a second season was inevitable. Last year it was teased by Netflix with a clip of Jenna (as Wednesday) saying: "Over the past few weeks I've been hunted, haunted and mimicked millions of times across the internet. It's been pure torture. Thank you." This was followed by the announcement: "More misery is coming. The global phenomenon will return for season two."

Prepping season two after a brief vacation really fired Jenna up. "It's been exciting," she was happy to report, "just developing new storylines and seeing where characters are going. Starting those conversations has been really, really fun. I think it's going to be bigger and better, which is cool." ■

Meet the Nevermore crowd

ENID SINCLAIR EMMA MYERS

Emma Myers has expressed enthusiasm about rejoining the cast as Wednesday's werewolf roommate, stating: "I can't wait to see my friends and jump back into it." This time around, Enid embarks on a transformative journey that delves deeper into her identity as a werewolf and her evolving relationships at Nevermore. Following her full transformation at the end of season two, Enid begins to explore the complexities of her werewolf nature – as she navigates the responsibilities and instincts that come with being a werewolf, Enid confronts internal conflicts and external perceptions, striving to find balance and acceptance within her community.

Enid's relationship with Wednesday also continues to evolve in season two. Their bond, forged through shared experiences and mutual respect, is tested as they encounter new mysteries and adversaries. Enid's unwavering support and contrasting personality provide a grounding presence for Wednesday, while also highlighting Enid's own resilience and courage. However, as *Wednesday* season two unfolds, viewers can expect a deeper exploration of Enid's character, highlighting her growth from a supportive friend to a formidable individual in her own right.

TYLER GALPIN HUNTER DOOHAN

In season two, Tyler faces new challenges as he navigates the aftermath of his Hyde identity being exposed. The season opens with Tyler confined in Willow Hill Psychiatric Hospital, restrained in chains. A teaser has revealed a dishevelled Tyler during a tense reunion with Wednesday, suggesting that their complex relationship will be further explored, although we know romance will be off the cards as Jenna asserts her power as series producer.

While specific details about Tyler's storyline remain under wraps, his continued presence hints at a deeper exploration of his character, possibly delving into his past and the origins of his Hyde transformation. Fans have speculated about a potential redemption arc, especially given the show's shift away from romantic subplots to focus more on darker themes.

BIANCA BARCLAY JOY SUNDAY

Sunday reprises her role as Bianca, the siren student at Nevermore Academy. Bianca continues to evolve beyond her Queen Bee persona, adding depth to the series' exploration of supernatural beings and delving deeper into her personal struggles and complex relationships.

The actress has expressed her desire to portray a more vulnerable side of Bianca, stating: "I'd love to see Bianca really expand and allow herself to be more vulnerable with the people around her." The dynamic between Bianca and Wednesday also takes a compelling turn in season two. While their rivalry remains, Sunday is excited to explore their evolving friendship, noting: "I think it's so natural for her and Wednesday to have a little bit of competition. I'm really excited to see their friendship bloom alongside that."

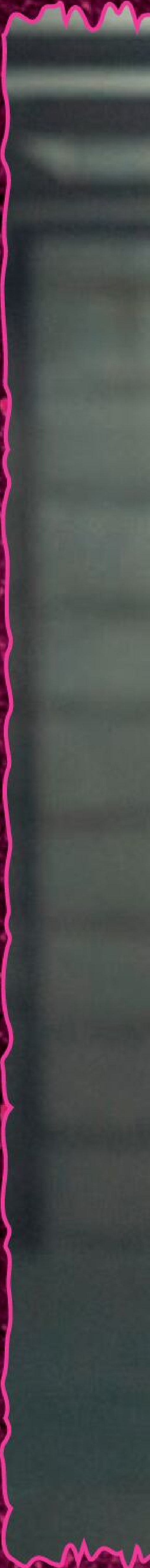
Bianca's strained relationship with her mother, Gabrielle, a leader of the Morning Song cult, is another focal point. Sunday believes there's potential for reconciliation, saying: "There's always room for redemption when either side works towards it."

A LOOK AT SEASON 2

SHE'S BACK IN BLACK

WEDNESDAY'S BACK AT NEVERMORE, WHERE LESSONS GET DARKER

After becoming one of Netflix's most watched shows, there was no doubt there'd be another season



With its blend of gothic aesthetics, compelling storytelling, and a cast that brings the Addams Family to life for a new generation, *Wednesday* season two is poised to captivate audiences once again, after cementing its status as a cultural phenomenon with season one. Now, as Netflix's *Wednesday* gears up for its highly anticipated second season, fans are eager to return to the eerie halls of Nevermore Academy. With production wrapped and an August 6 release looming on the horizon, here's everything we know about the upcoming season, from plot teasers and casting news to behind-the-scenes anecdotes... ▶

Emma Myers returns as Wednesday's classmate Enid Sinclair

When we see Tyler Galpin, played by Hunter Doohan, again for the first time, he's in an asylum

MEET THE NEW CAST

STEVE BUSCEMI AS BARRY DORT

Veteran actor Steve Buscemi joins the cast as Barry Dort, the new headmaster of Nevermore Academy, succeeding the late Larissa Weems. Buscemi has described Dort as "a bit of a mysterious figure". Buscemi expressed his enthusiasm for the role, stating: "I've always been a fan of the Addams Family – the movies, the TV show – and I was a big fan of *Wednesday*, so I was very excited to know that they were interested in me to play the new principal of Nevermore." He also praised co-star Jenna Ortega, calling her "sharp, funny, down to earth" and "a wonderful actress, a wonderful scene partner".

Director Tim Burton highlighted Buscemi's contribution to the show, noting: "Steve brought a new energy to this season. You can just sense when people love watching somebody work and respect somebody's work."

MEET THE NEW CAST

LADY GAGA'S CAMEO

Lady Gaga is confirmed to make a cameo in season two. While details of her role remain under wraps, Gaga has expressed her excitement about joining the cast and working with Jenna Ortega. She also said that she had "an amazing time" working on the show. She added: "It was just a really, really special environment to be there with her and Tim, two people that I respect and have been inspired by so much." Jenna reciprocated, describing Gaga as "the best" and "definitely one of the most talented individuals I've ever worked with".

> "It was a really special environment to be there with Jenna and Tim, two people I respect and have been inspired by"

Fred Armisen returns to the show as Uncle Fester

Lurch, Morticia, Wednesday, Pugsley, Thing and Gomez all return for season two

THANDIWE NEWTON AS DR FAIRBURN

Thandiwe Newton joins as Dr Fairburn, a new character in the series. Star of *The Sixth Sense* Haley Joel Osment is another famous face joining the cast of the second season – he appears as a guest star.

MEET THE NEW CAST

NEW AND RETURNING CAST

The title character, played by Jenna Ortega, of course returns for season two, which sees Wednesday return to Nevermore to confront new supernatural threats and unravel lingering mysteries from her first year. The season kicks off with a chilling reunion between Wednesday and Tyler Galpin (Hunter Doohan), now confined to an asylum after his Hyde identity was exposed. This encounter sets the stage for a darker, more complex narrative for the series' second outing.

As well as Ortega, the core cast also returns. Fans of the series

▶

In the new season, Pugsley joins his sister at Nevermore Academy

Catherine Zeta Jones as Morticia and Luis Guzmán as Gomez

> "Each episode will probably feel a little bit more like a movie, which is nice"

can expect to see Emma Myers (Enid Sinclair), Joy Sunday (Bianca Barclay), Moosa Mostafa (Eugene), Georgie Farmer (Ajax) and Victor Dorobantu (Thing). Meanwhile, Catherine Zeta Jones (Morticia Addams), Luis Guzmán (Gomez Addams), Isaac Ordonez (Pugsley Addams) and Luyanda Unati Lewis-Nyawo (Deputy Ritchie Santiago) have been promoted to series regulars. Jamie McShane (Sheriff Donovan Galpin) and Fred Armisen (Uncle Fester) also return in guest-starring roles. There's also a slew of new characters appearing this time around, who fans can look forward to meeting, including Steve Buscemi and Joanna Lumley.

Jenna Ortega is back, and this time she's not just the star – she's also a producer

FILMING LOCATIONS

Departing from its original Romanian setting, season two of *Wednesday* was filmed in the scenic landscapes of Ireland, specifically in Wicklow. The move marked the largest production ever to film in Ireland, both in terms of scale and budget, with each episode reportedly costing up to $20 million to make. The choice of location adds a "sense of timeless beauty, wonder, and epic spectacle" to the series, according to the showrunners. But why was the decision made to move the series? Well, it was influenced by several key factors encountered during the first season's production in Romania. Executive producer Steve Stark mentioned that while Romania was creatively inspiring, the production faced significant logistical difficulties. These challenges led the team to consider alternative locations for the second season.

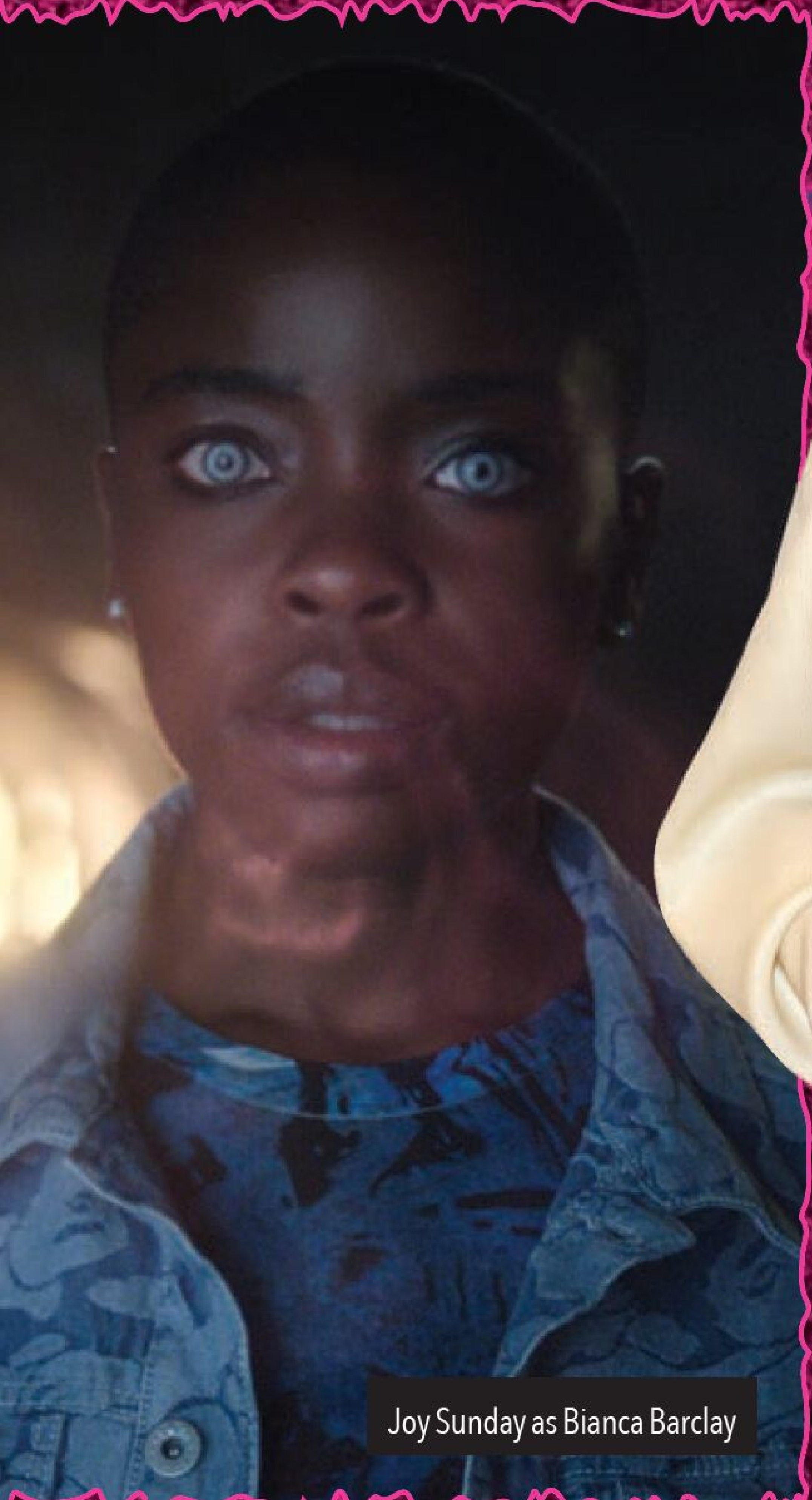
TEASERS AND TRAILERS

Netflix has released a sneak peek titled Here We Woe Again, directed by Tim Burton and written by showrunners Al Gough and Miles Millar. The teaser features a tense ▶

A NEW ADDITION

PUBERT ADDAMS

Season two introduces Pubert Addams, the baby brother of Wednesday and Pugsley. While details about Pubert's role are scarce, the addition of the character hints at new family dynamics and potential comedic moments. The cast has teased fans, saying: "Pubert brings a fresh energy to the family."



Joy Sunday as Bianca Barclay

MEET THE NEW CAST

JOANNA LUMLEY AS GRANDMAMA

Joanna Lumley makes her debut as Grandmama, adding to the family's rich tapestry. Joanna has shared her enthusiasm for joining the cast, where she portrays Hester Frump, Morticia Addams' mother and Wednesday's grandmother. In an interview with Netflix's Tudum, Lumley expressed her excitement about working with Tim Burton: "There's always something thrilling about working for Tim Burton. His whole mind takes him to a different world, and the world that they've created here for Wednesday and Nevermore and the family is just intoxicating. It's wonderful."

The star also highlighted the distinctive costume design for her character, noting: "I get to wear many, many huge wigs, one on top of the other, and lots of quite constraining clothes, so I love it." Showrunner Miles Millar praised Lumley's portrayal, saying: "The first day on set when Joanna walked on, she just was Hester, and she nailed every single line, and it's just so delicious. She's perfect and hilarious. That Wednesday-Hester relationship is unique; you see a twinkle in both their eyes when they're together on-screen. I think everyone is going to fall in love with Hester."

MEET THE NEW CAST

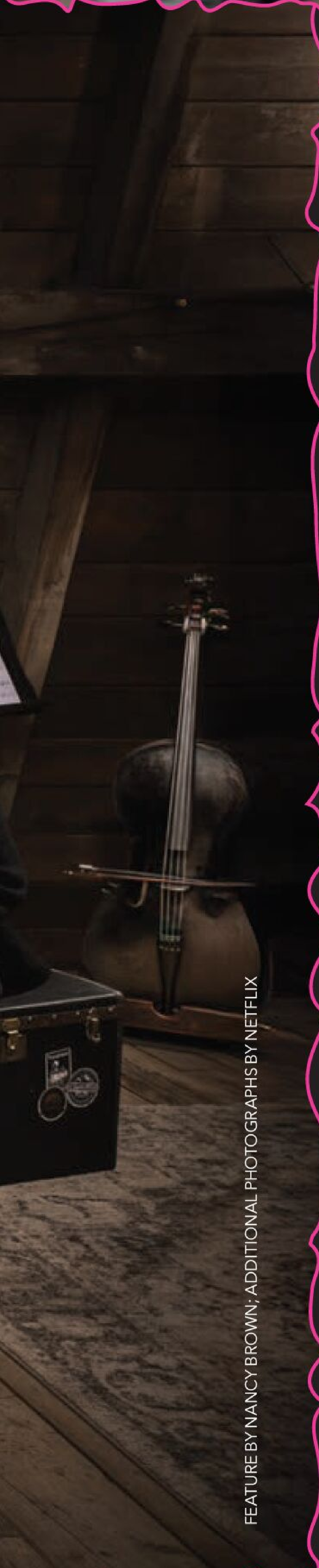
LUYANDA UNATI LEWIS-NYAWO AS SHERIFF RITCHIE SANTIAGO

With former sheriff Donovan Galpin disgraced, there's a new law in Jericho. Sheriff Ritchie Santiago arrives on the scene and is smart, no-nonsense and capable. When a fresh wave of crimes hit the town, Santiago isn't afraid to team up with Wednesday to get the job done. Luyanda Unati Lewis-Nyawo has previously appeared in the action-packed *Back In Action*, the critically acclaimed British crime series *Top Boy*, and has voiced various video games.

The season two cast, including some season one favourites and some new additions

"We've decided we want to lean into the horror aspect of the show a little bit more"

Thing is back for season two!



reunion between Wednesday and Tyler in an asylum, hinting at the dark twists to come.

Trailers aside, Gough and Millar have described the upcoming season as "delightfully dark, kooky and mysterious", with Wednesday navigating family dynamics, friendships and old adversaries. Jenna Ortega, who also serves as a producer, emphasised the shift in tone this time around. She told *Variety*: "We've decided we want to lean into the horror aspect of the show a little bit more," noting the decision to remove romantic subplots to focus on Wednesday's individual journey.

Elsewhere, the season will explore unanswered questions from the previous instalment, including the identity of Wednesday's mysterious stalker who sent her ominous text messages.

With each episode designed to feel like a standalone film, viewers can expect a series that's more action-packed and visually striking. As Ortega teased: "Each episode will probably feel a little bit more like a movie, which is nice." In fact, season two features an episode heavily inspired by classic slasher films. Ortega mentioned that the episode draws from '80s horror movies such as *Prom Night* and *Carrie*. The team aimed to create more elaborate and horror-centric sequences, incorporating jump-scare moments and horror references throughout the episode. We're not screaming, you are! ■

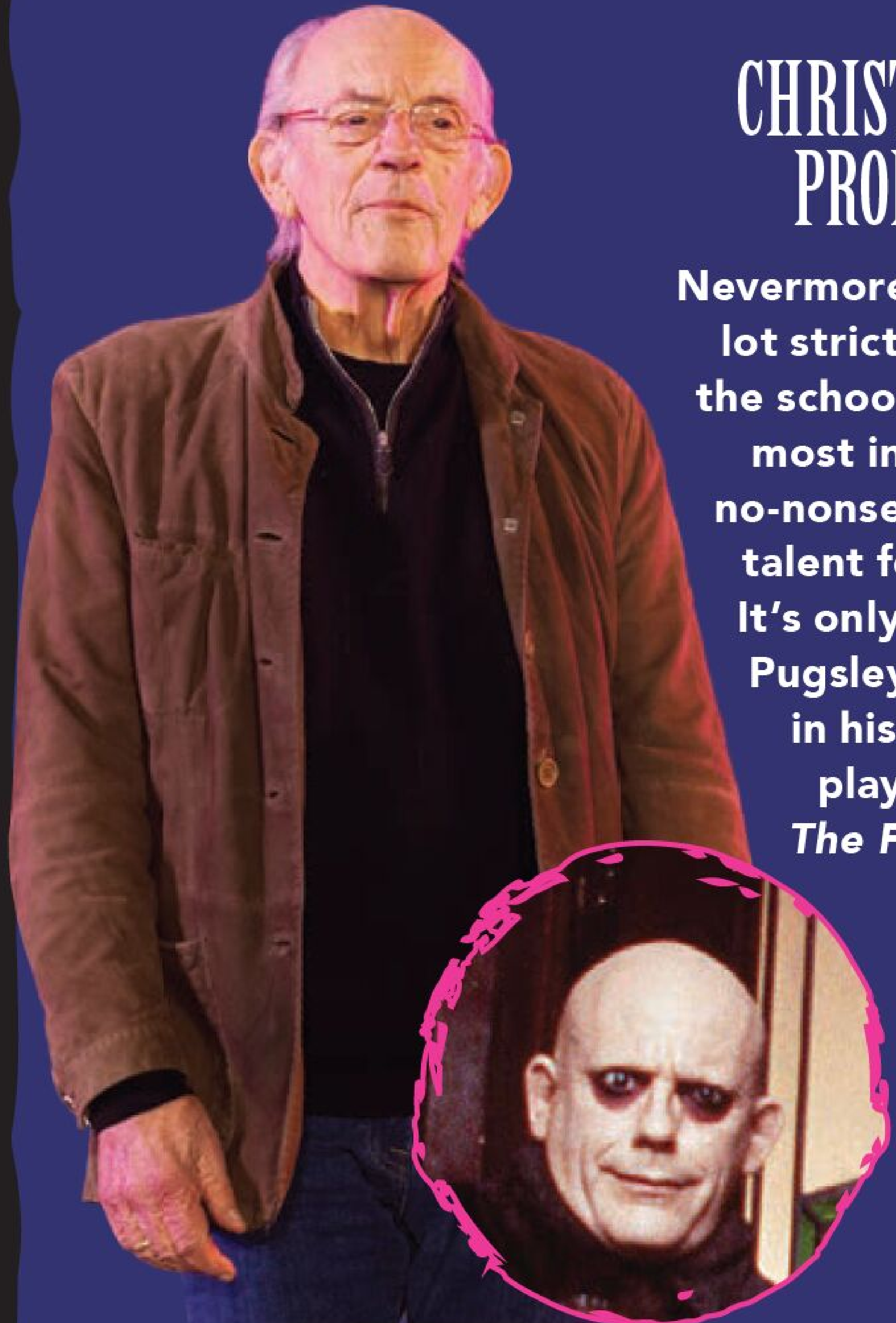
FEATURE BY NANCY BROWN; ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX

MEET THE NEW CAST

HEATHER MATARAZZO AS JUDI

Judi is Dr Fairburn's relentlessly upbeat executive assistant at Willow Hill – a woman who wears a smile like armour and is always keen to please. But beneath her sunny disposition lies a sharp edge, especially when she encounters Wednesday, to whom she takes an immediate dislike. Expect tensions to build!

Heather is a kooky cult favourite who is best known for her roles in *Roseanne*, *The Princess Diaries*, *Welcome To The Dollhouse*, and *54*. She's also appeared in creepy films like *Booger*, *Scream 3* and *Hostel 2*.



CHRISTOPHER LLOYD AS PROFESSOR ORLOFF

Nevermore's halls just got a whole lot stricter. Professor Orloff is the school's longest-serving (and most intimidating) teacher, a no-nonsense disciplinarian with a talent for sniffing out mischief. It's only a matter of time before Pugsley Addams lands squarely in his sights. Best known for playing Doc in the *Back To The Future* films, Christopher Lloyd also played the unforgettable Uncle Fester in the iconic '90s films directed by Barry Sonnenfeld.

BILLIE PIPER AS CAPRI

Singer and actress Billie Piper has also joined the cast, portraying a new character named Capri. While specific details about Capri remain under wraps, the star has shared her enthusiasm for the project. In a recent interview, she described the experience as "a really, really special environment" and praised her co-star Ortega, saying: "She's the best. Definitely one of the most talented individuals I've ever worked with."

CHAPTER 1

WEDNESDAY'S CHILD IS FULL OF WOE

After being kicked out of school, Wednesday finds herself at Nevermore Academy, where her parents fell in love

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"I find social media to be a soul-sucking void of meaningless affirmation."

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

When we first meet Wednesday Addams, she's strolling through Nancy Reagan High School in signature black, deadpanning in voiceover: "I'm not sure whose twisted idea it was to put hundreds of adolescents in underfunded schools run by people whose dreams were crushed years ago, but I admire the sadism."

She discovers her younger brother Pugsley tied up and stuffed inside a locker. It turns out she's started having psychic visions, so when she touches him she sees who the bullies are. He asks her: "Wednesday, what are you gonna do?" Her answer: "What I do best!" And what she does is crash a practice by the boys' water polo team, telling the Speedo-clad lads: "The only person who gets to torture my brother is me," as she unleashes piranha fish into the pool, one of which – much to her smirking delight – chomps down on a boy's private parts.

She gets expelled from her eighth school in five years, so her folks Morticia and Gomez Addams opt to send her to Nevermore Academy, a boarding school in Jericho, Vermont, where her parents met and fell in love. Nevermore is a school for "outcasts" such as werewolves, vampires, sirens and psychics.

Once there, she meets Principal Larissa Weems, who was Morticia's roommate at Nevermore and is wary of the younger Addams, but who agrees to make an exception by admitting her mid-term. Wednesday's own roommate is Enid Sinclair, a lovely rainbow-loving werewolf who hasn't yet learned how to "wolf out". Also at the school are Bianca Barclay, "the closest thing Nevermore has to royalty" (Enid's words) and a powerful, popular siren who immediately becomes ▶

SCARIEST BIT...

A backpacker stops for a coffee break in the woods near Nevermore, where something unseen attacks him. When the police discover him, bits of his torn-apart body are strewn all over the place.

Wednesday's rival. Then there's Xavier Thorpe, Bianca's ex-boyfriend, who takes an interest in the new girl at school.

There's no love lost between Wednesday and her mother, although her parents are looking out for her when they dispatch Thing – aka the disembodied hand with a life of its own – to watch over her. She's also under the watchful eye of dorm mum Miss Thornhill, who gifts her with a black dahlia flower (named after Wednesday's favourite unsolved murder).

Wednesday signs up for fencing class and challenges Bianca to a duel. Bianca wins, but Wednesday proves to be a skilled fencer. Unimpressed by her new environment, she begins plotting an escape and forces Thing to help her.

In the meantime, Principal Weems forces Wednesday to attend therapy sessions with Dr Valerie Kinbott. Remorseless about the piranha incident, she resists the sessions and remains emotionally distant. She also continues to experience psychic visions, especially when she touches people or objects, which reveal events from the past or offer glimpses into the future.

Wednesday sneaks off to Jericho's annual Pilgrim World carnival, where she meets Tyler Galpin, a "normie" teen who works in a coffee shop and whose father Sheriff Donovan Galpin is holding a grudge against her dad Gomez. She impresses Tyler by fixing the broken coffee machine and Tyler offers to help her escape from Nevermore.

In a flashback, we see bullying school kids run over Wednesday's pet scorpion with their bikes. In the present day she's nearly killed by a falling gargoyle, which turns out to

FUNNIEST BIT...

That pre-credits scene, where we can't actually see what the piranha is chowing down on but it's obvious from the boy's face that he's just lost what we later learn to be one of his testicles.

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON; PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

[About Enid] "She's been smothering me with hospitality. I hope to return the favour, in her sleep."

DID YOU KNOW?

* The episode's title is from a nursery rhyme.
* The sticker in Pugsley's locker is from the 1931 horror flick *Frankenstein*.
* That's really Jenna playing the cello to the Rolling Stones' *Paint It Black*; she learned to play it for the show.

BEHIND THE SCENES

be the handiwork of nerdy student Rowan. He confronts Wednesday, claiming she's destined to destroy the school, but before he can bring her down he's attacked and killed by a creature that appears to be half-bear, half-lizard.

All of this leads Wednesday to muse about her first week at Nevermore: "I narrowly avoided death twice, discovered that my father may be a murderer, learned that I could potentially destroy the school and was mysteriously saved by a homicidal monster." As she tells her parents: "I think I'm going to love it here!" ■

JENNA: A DARK BEGINNING...

JENNA'S DREAMS OF ACTING WERE SUITABLY DARKLY INSPIRED

When Jenna Ortega was growing up in La Quinta, California, she saw Dakota Fanning as a kidnap victim in the film *Man On Fire* around age six and decided she wanted to be an actress. The thriller gave her nightmares and she felt of Fanning's performance: "I couldn't fathom how someone so young could do something that would scare me so aggressively. But I also loved the way that it made me feel. I decided that's what I was passionate about."

That came as a surprise to Jenna's parents, who had no connection to the film or TV business. Her Mexican father was a sheriff and her mother, who was of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent, worked as a nurse. In fact her mum laughed when Jenna said she wanted to act, because just a couple of weeks before she'd dreamed of being the first female US president after developing a crush on Barack Obama. ►

Mrs Ortega also worried about the negatives of her daughter going into show business at a young age, but stubborn Jenna eventually got her way. Her mum posted a video of the nine year old doing a monologue and she was signed to an agency, with the supportive parent driving her to auditions in Los Angeles up to five days a week for six hours at a time.

EARLY PROMISE

The fourth of six children later thanked her parents for all the sacrifices they made and the effort paid off, although initially all she landed were commercials, including for McDonald's Happy Meals. Roles in the sitcom *Rob* (2012) and 2013 Marvel movie *Iron Man 3* followed, and that same year she had a small but significant part in horror sequel *Insidious: Chapter 2* as a young girl named Annie in the terrifying final scenes.

She was around 11 at the time and thrilled to be in a film directed by James Wan. "It was my first horror set," she recalled. "That was pretty exciting because I was working with James Wan, who seemed to be doing every horror film at the time that was performing successfully at the box office. At that time in my career, though, I was just happy to be there."

Jenna had a newfound admiration for the horror genre, adding: "I've just started getting into scary movies. I wasn't able to watch them before because I'd have nightmares and couldn't sleep without the lights on after watching them."

Ortega was also hopeful that she'd get to return for the third chapter in the franchise. "We didn't know what they had planned for the next film, but the way that the script was set up it seemed like they were going to use our story for upcoming jobs. Little did I know that they would do a prequel next!"

An early role in *Iron Man 3* showed promise

"They told me I had booked the show and I just started bawling like a big baby and I couldn't talk for like 20 minutes"

Playing Hayley on *Days Of Our Lives* was great exposure

A small but significant role in *Insidious: Chapter 2* was an early taste of horror

Also in 2013, she popped up in the hugely popular daytime soap *Days Of Our Lives* as a youngster called Hayley. Her big break came a year later when she scored a recurring role on comedy show *Jane The Virgin* for a five-year stint as the childhood version of Latina heroine Jane Villanueva, played by Gina Rodriguez.

The series was praised for its positive representation of the Latin community and Ortega had equal praise for Villanueva, saying: "I love what she stands for. Every Monday she posts a Motivational Monday where she gives a shout-out to a Hispanic in the business, which is something that I find very inspiring."

Jenna was also inspired to make her own stand against discrimination and to push for social change by supporting DoSomething.org's Pride Over Prejudice campaign. Then 13, she appeared in a livestream, reiterating: "It's important to embrace your culture today because there are so many different ethnicities in America. At the end of the day, you are you. You've got to stay true to yourself and you can't change yourself in order to fit in or to make someone else feel comfortable."

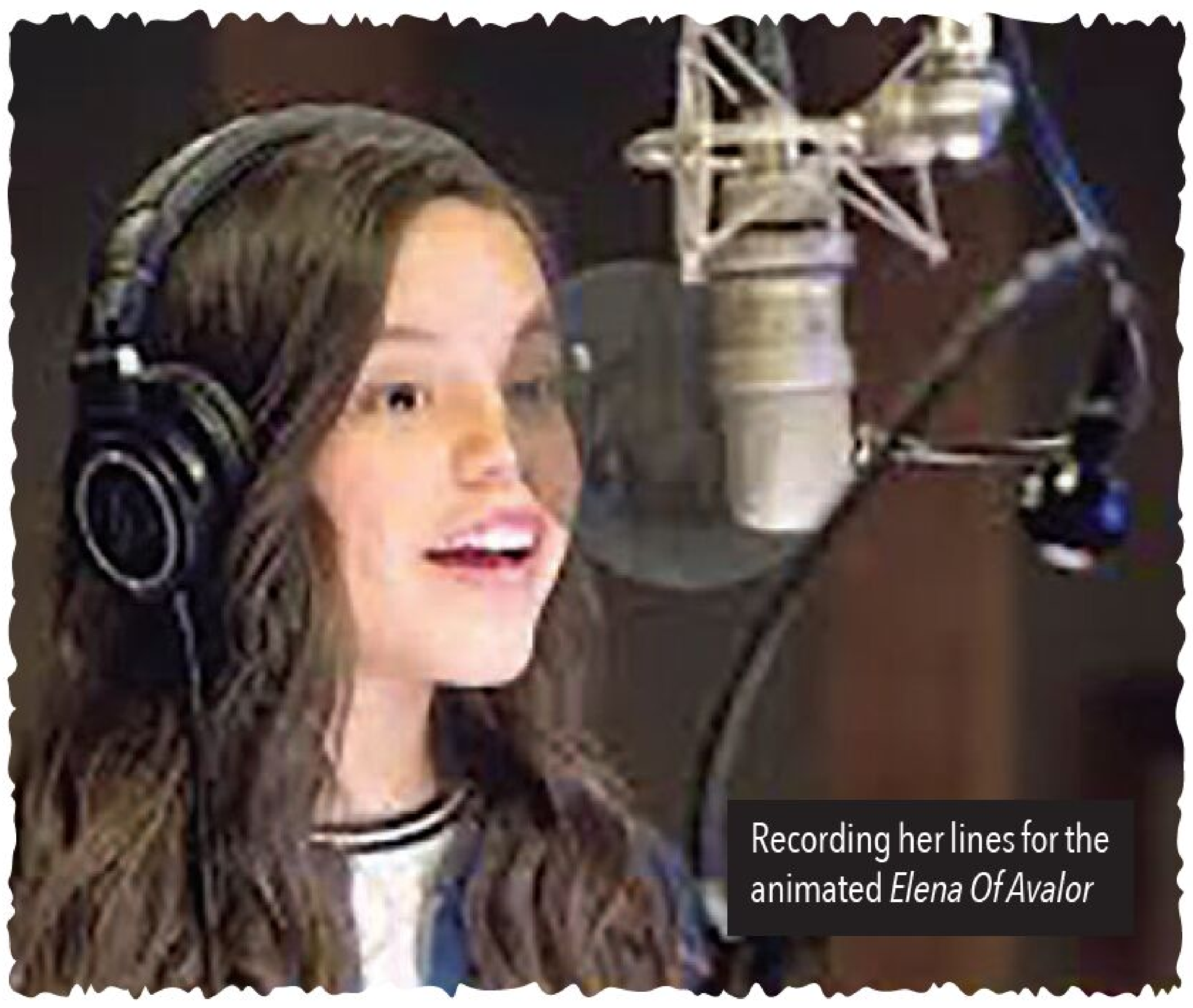
As a guest star on *Jane The Virgin* rather than a series lead, Ortega was able to take on other roles, such as the naughty Mary Ann in direct-to-video flick *The Little Rascals Save The Day* (2014) and the just-as-naughty Darcy in 2015's *Richie Rich*.

Then the girl who once told her parents: "I'm gonna be on Disney Channel one day, you just watch" was proved right when she was cast as wannabe inventor Harley Diaz on *Stuck In Ihe Middle* across three seasons from 2016. Securing her first lead role at age 15 after auditioning the previous year is a moment she'll never forget. "I remember when I got the phone call. I was sitting on my mom's bed and they told me I had booked the show and I just started bawling like a big baby and I couldn't talk for like 20 minutes. I just remember it being one of the best days of my life."

She was juggling both the Disney Channel show and *Jane The Virgin*, so her mum decided it was okay for her to quit school, where she was in eighth grade. "One day my mom picked me up from school and she goes: 'You're not going back.' I was like: 'Shoot, I've got to say goodbye to my friends.' I went back the next day and said goodbye."

Harley Diaz was one of seven children, so Jenna was able to draw on her own experiences of a big family. "I love playing Harley because she's a lot like me in real life. We both come from big Latino American families and are the middle child. I like that the creators made her smart and that she's able to talk directly to her audience." As the show became a hit she beamed: "It's been an amazing experience. I relate to Harley a lot because we both can be goofballs [and] we both love math and science."

As Darcy in the Netflix sitcom *Richie Rich*


Recording her lines for the animated *Elena Of Avalor*

BECOMING A STAR

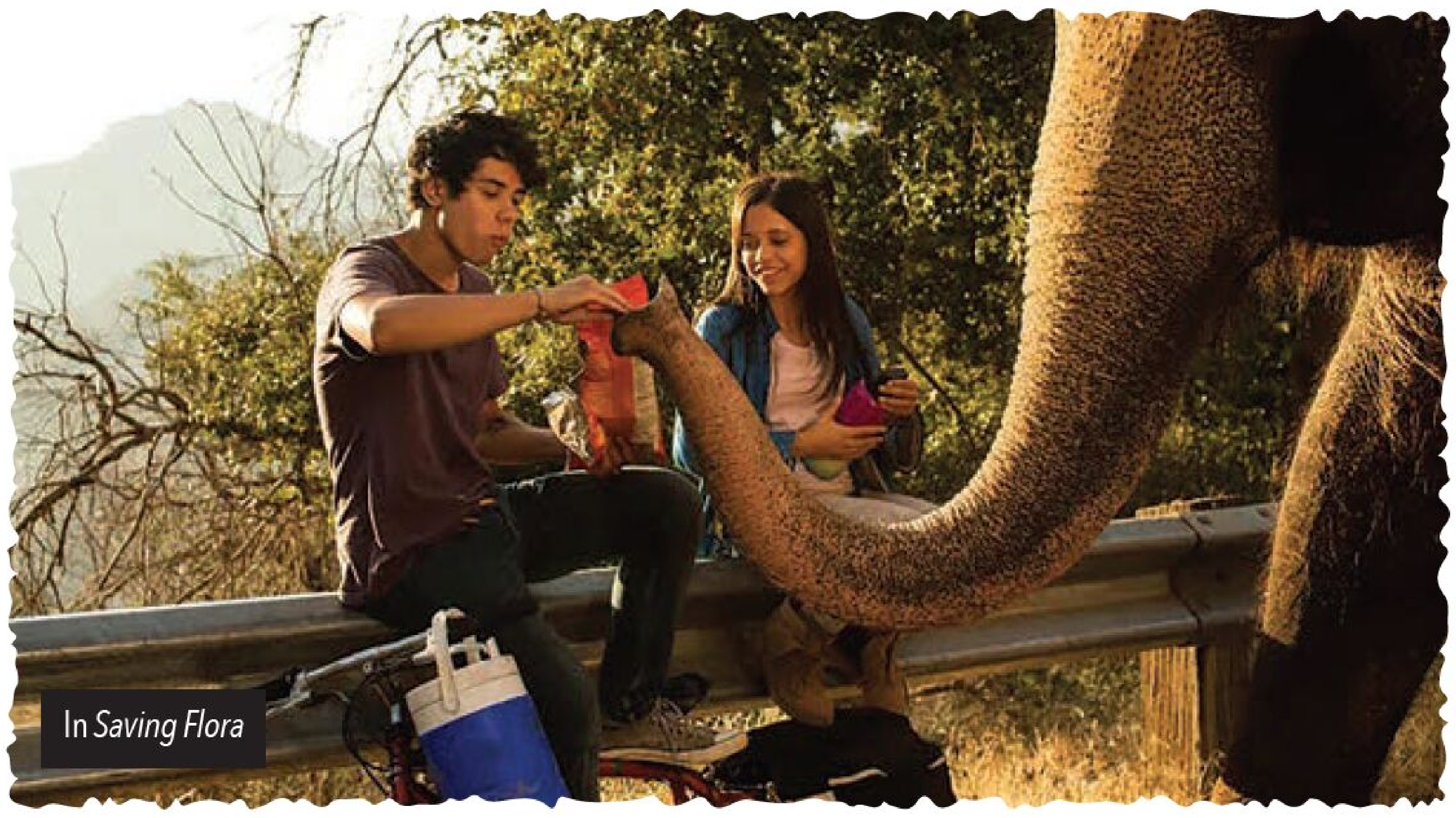
She was nominated three times for an Imagen Award as Best Young Actor – Television, and won once. The awards are given out by the Imagen Foundation, which rewards positive depictions of Latinos in the entertainment industry, so it was a great honour for Ortega, as was being on the show itself. "I love being the lead on *Stuck In The Middle* mainly because the show means so much to me, especially because it's representing Hispanics on the Disney Channel. I feel diversity is much needed in the business so to ▶

With Penn Badgley in the second series of the Netflix hit *You*

As part of the ensemble cast of *The Little Rascals Save The Day*

be able to carry the show is crazy. It's so weird for me to say that because I'm not the bragging type."

Ortega was proud to represent again when she did the voice of Disney Princess Isabel, the supportive sister of the title character in the channel's *Elena Of Avalor* made-for-TV film and spin-off series. "I always wanted to be a Disney Princess," she gushed, "so to be able to be a part of *Elena Of Avalor* and voice Princess Isabel is a dream come true. I love her creativity and determination, and we both love our sisters."


In *Saving Flora*

There was another upside for this campaigner for diversity and representation: "It's a huge deal for me. When I auditioned I didn't know Elena was Disney's first Latina princess and I also didn't know I was auditioning to play her little sister for a series. I thought I was doing a movie. After recording the movie, they called me back to do the show. They said: 'Oh, you didn't hear? You are Disney's second Latina princess.' I freaked out. When I was younger I told my mom I wanted to look like Cinderella and I asked if I could dye my hair blonde. So I'm very proud of that. Now little Hispanic princesses can see themselves on TV."

> "I'm very proud of that. Now little Hispanic princesses can see themselves on TV"

With success came fame and red carpets, the latter of which the 4ft 11ins teenager didn't take to at first: "I remember doing my first red carpet and I had no idea what I was doing. Turns out it's really hard to find stuff for girls my height and size. Nothing that I like to wear would fit me, so I ended up wearing this old gramma outfit. It was just a bad experience. I did not look good."

Jenna In *The Babysitter: Killer Queen*

Fortunately that changed when she found a stylist she could collaborate with. "It's awesome because I can wear whatever I want and he just alters it. And I love my glam team. I call them my boys because I have three boys on my team for hair, make-up and styling. We have so much fun. I swear I think the best part about those events is the time we spend before making jokes and laughing."

She also had an awesome time doing her own Radio Disney show, *What's Good With Jenna Ortega*. "Once a week for an hour I would take over Radio Disney and just spread good vibes. I was all about spreading positivity and love and I kind of talked about my experience being a Disney Channel actress in LA, which was super fun."

Had fame as a Disney Channel star gone to her head? Jenna laughed: "Now that I'm a Disney Channel star I go home and my siblings still make sure to let me know that it's my day to do the dishes. I have to go outside and pull the weeds because I wasn't there when they did it by themselves. When I go out to the grocery store I usually get recognised, so I take a couple of photos. I really love meeting my fans. They are all super sweet."

But it turns out some of the so-called fans had an agenda: "Some people who weren't very nice to me in the past try to be my best friend now and I'm sweet to them. Whatever. I'm

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON; ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY BLUMHOUSE, DISNEY, MARVEL, NBC, NETFLIX, SIGNATURE ENTERTAINMENT, UNIVERSAL, WARNER BROS

not trying to make anybody have a reason to hate me. I just want to spread love and positivity and I'm not going to hold a grudge on anybody."

As *Stuck In The Middle* came to a close, Jenna was a circus owner's daughter in little-seen film *Saving Flora* (2018) and found herself at a crossroads. Fearing she'd be pigeonholed for her Disney Channel work, she worried she was "too old for the young roles and too young for the old roles" and even considered giving up acting.

Salvation came in the form of Ellie Alves in the second series of Netflix thriller *You*. Airing in 2019, the season featured 15-year-old Ellie striking up a friendship with Penn Badgley's serial killer Joe. Jenna loved her time on "easily one of my favourite sets that I've ever, ever been on" and was hailed by *The Hollywood Reporter* as a standout cast member.

She was back in horror territory for director McG's Netflix film *The Babysitter: Killer Queen* (2020), of which she raved: "That was so much fun. McG is such a delight to work with. He just knew how to have a good time. It was exciting to come to work every day because you never knew what line he wanted you to improvise or where certain takes would go."

Ortega was praised again by *The Hollywood Reporter* for her starring role as a student grappling with the aftermath of a school shooting in HBO movie *The Fallout* (2021) but she already had her eye on being on the big screen in a big hit.

"I enjoy playing different characters because it's really fun to pretend to be someone I'm not," she said. "I've appreciated every single role I've booked. Each one has helped me grow. [Now] I hope to be able to play different roles in big movies some day."

Having gone straight from filming *The Fallout* to a certain blockbuster franchise called *Scream*, Jenna was about to get her wish. ■

A starring role in *The Fallout* won Jenna critical acclaim

CHAPTER 2

WOE IS THE LONELIEST NUMBER

The authorities are asking questions and pointing fingers at Nevermore pupils, but what's really going on?

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"I act as if I don't care if people dislike me. Deep down, I secretly enjoy it."

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

"This story is about to take a dark turn," Wednesday warns us – as if episode one, with its genital-munching piranhas and dismembered bodies, wasn't dark – as we're given a recap of the pilot episode. "Usually I love dark turns, like when the carousel brakes mysteriously failed at my eighth birthday party, but not this one."

We don't blame her. She's rattled, or as rattled as Wednesday Addams ever gets, to learn that nerdy Rowan's body is missing from the scene of the attack, plus

the police are more concerned about the murders of three hikers – which the Mayor is blaming on bears but the Sheriff reckons is the work of Nevermore students. Principal Weems is incensed by that, while guessing that Rowan has done a runner.

Wednesday has hibernated with grizzlies, so she's well placed to know the difference between bears and mystery monsters. With Weems out of the room, she tells the Sheriff that she thinks someone is trying to cover up Rowan's murder and has deep-cleaned the crime scene. "You and I both know there's a monster out there and Rowan is its latest victim," she adds just before – shock, horror! – a very much alive and well Rowan walks in.

In another therapy session, Wednesday insists she saw what she saw and isn't acting out or hiding her emotions. As for ▶

FUNNIEST BIT...

Wednesday's double finger snap, which devoted Addams Family fans will know is a nod to the theme tune from the original TV show.

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"Dead people are notoriously bad at returning calls."

BEHIND THE SCENES

remaining a loner at school, despite her parents' wishes that she find her people, she says: "I like being an island." And fear of rejection? Rejection is something she enjoys, not fears.

Enid is happy that her roomie is back at school, now that Wednesday is on a mission to stay and find out just what the hell is going on. She's wondering if she's losing her mind, which "is not nearly as much fun as I anticipated". Given that Enid is Nevermore's gossip queen, what's her take on him not being dead? Enid's much too busy prepping for the school's annual Poe Cup – a no-holds-barred, Edgar Allan Poe-themed boat race in honour of the writer.

SCARIEST BIT....

Wednesday's recurring visions include one of herself in a white dress, who creepily tells her: "You are the key." What does it mean and why on Earth would Wednesday ever wear white?

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON; PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX

Weems tells Wednesday that Rowan has been expelled and she's not buying Wednesday's claim that she was in the woods the previous night because she heard a noise and was investigating. She'd had a psychic vision, hadn't she? Wednesday is urged by the Principal to join a club, one that tickles her fancy, to which she replies: "The last person who tickled me lost a finger."

Speaking of fingers – well, a whole handful of them – she orders Thing to follow Rowan. He was Xavier's roomate, but when she interrogates him Xavier is more concerned about warning her to stay away from Tyler. So Wednesday confronts Rowan herself, who warns her: "Back off and leave me alone," as he is whisked off campus by Miss Thornhill and dropped off at the train station where, followed by Thing, he shape-shifts into a grey-haired bloke and gives Thing the slip. But – shock, horror part two! – the bloke is revealed to be Weems.

Wednesday attends Miss Thornhill's class about venomous plants, where her knowledge makes her a threat to brainy Bianca. Enid is also gunning for Bianca, who in the past has dominated the Poe Cup. With Enid's teammate Yoko out of action, Wednesday agrees to join the squad – in a Catwoman costume, no less. Despite Bianca and her team's blatant cheating, Enid's squad triumphs.

Wednesday has been investigating a strange rune-like symbol she saw in Rowan's book, which leads her to a hidden passageway and a hidden underground library. But who else is down there with her? ■

DID YOU KNOW?

*** Nevermore's most famous previous pupil Edgar Allan Poe is a real writer who penned tales of terror and the macabre, four of which lend their names to the school's rowing teams.**

*** The first Poe Cup, we learn, was given out in 1897 – the same year that super-scary *Dracula* was published.**

*** The Yoko character is a vampire-styled homage to John Lennon's wife Yoko Ono.**

*** Oh and there's a gaffe when Rowan pops to the train station loo – it says "Toilets" when in the States it should be "Restrooms".**

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"Sartre said: 'Hell is other people.' He was my first crush."

TAKING CONTROL

JENNA WEAVES HER MAGIC IN HOLLYWOOD

Jenna was criticised as "the least likely drug dealer in movie history" in *Finestkind*

Since the first season of *Wednesday* gave her superstar status, Jenna Ortega has been the busiest of bees. As covered elsewhere in this publication she's hosted *Saturday Night Live*, returned to and exited from the *Scream* franchise and is now back as goth goddess Wednesday Addams for season two.

She was also a drug pusher in thriller flick *Finestkind* (2023), which despite a cast that included Ben Foster and Tommy Lee Jones, is something she would possibly rather forget. Reviewers felt that Ortega was miscast as "the least likely drug dealer in movie history" as the film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival to great indifference. Before its release she said of its writer-director Brian Helgeland: "He's incredibly collaborative. He's also such a sweetheart." But she hasn't said anything about him or the flop film since.

Still, Jenna is a risk-taker who says she's been inspired by Wednesday Addams "because she's somebody who doesn't care what anybody else thinks". As a youngster in Hollywood, she recalled: "I was a kid and growing up in this industry I was very much a people pleaser. I felt like a puppet. I didn't really have much of a say."

All of that changed, of course, on the set of *Wednesday* (even if she now wishes she'd expressed her ideas with more tact) and she was determined to push herself creatively, which is why she took on "the most complex character that I've ever played" in the 2024 erotic drama *Miller's Girl*.

Jenna as Wednesday Addams with Emma Myers as Enid Sinclair

Jenna hosted *Saturday Night Live*

In it she starred opposite Martin Freeman as an 18-year-old girl sexually pursuing a much older teacher. The storyline creeped some viewers out, but as Jenna countered: "Art isn't always meant to be pleasant or happy [where] everyone skips off into the sunset at the end. We all have f***ed-up experiences at one point or another."

The film flew in under the radar, as did that same year's *Winter Spring Summer Or Fall*. Jenna played a clever gal who falls for a rebel musician in a drama that she also executive produced, and which saw her reunited with her *Wednesday* co-star Percy Hynes White.

Hardly anyone saw it, although a whole lot of people did see Ortega's next screen appearance in the video for Sabrina Carpenter's smash hit *Taste*. The same goes for *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice*, which conquered the worldwide box office.

The same cannot be said of Jenna's next screen credit, this year's poorly-received horror comedy *Death Of A Unicorn*, in which she teamed up with Paul Rudd as a daughter and dad who accidentally run over a unicorn, he bludgeons it to death with a tyre iron and all sorts of spooky goings-on ensue.

The most notable thing about the movie was that since producing company A24 is an indie operating outside the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, its filming was allowed to continue during the 2023 actors' strike. It appealed to Ortega because: "It's magical and mysterious and why would you not want to do a movie for two hours about unicorns?" Especially one in which she got to work with Rudd, whom she called "the most lovable, charismatic, dorky guy".

But while acting was always the goal, as the years have gone by, Jenna has stepped behind the scenes. During an appearance on Dax Shepard and Monica Padman's podcast *Armchair Expert*, Jenna claimed she was "almost unprofessional" during filming *Wednesday* because she was constantly changing her lines to ones that she thought were more authentic to her character. "The script supervisor thought I was going with something, and then I would have to sit down with the writers and they would be like: 'What happened to this scene?' And then I would have to go through and explain why I couldn't do certain things."

Sadly, her comments went down badly with the writers of Hollywood, who were on strike at the time, who took exception to what she had said. However, she has since said that she didn't express herself in the ▶

With Sabrina Carpenter in the video for the singer's hit *Taste*

"Jenna is very no nonsense, and I find that very refreshing and beautiful and artistic"

Jenna starred opposite Martin Freeman in *Miller's Girl*

Keep an eye out for Jenna's upcoming thriller *Hurry Up Tomorrow*

Jenna in last year's *Winter Spring Summer Or Fall* with Percy Hynes White

way she had intended. "I probably could have used my words better in describing all of that. I think, oftentimes, I'm such a rambler," she said in an interview with *Vanity Fair*. "I think it was hard because I felt like had I represented the situation better, it probably would've been received better. Everything that I said felt so magnified," she continued. "It felt almost dystopian to me. I felt like a caricature of myself." She also admitted the whole situation served as a reminder that "you're never going to please everybody", which was "really hard" for her to get her head around.

"I got sick of myself last year," she said. "My face was everywhere… so it's like, fair enough, if I were opening my phone and I saw the same girl with some stupid quote or something, I would be over it too."

While she says her comments about changing lines were ill-phrased, she did try to become more involved with the production of *Wednesday* by asking to become a producer on season one. However, on this occasion, her request was denied. "I think it's natural to be fearful of signing your life away and wanting some sort of agency or wanting confirmation that your voice would be heard," she said. "I'm aware of my position as an actor. I know that I'm not in charge… But I think with someone like Wednesday, who is in every scene, it only makes sense for that person to be that involved in what's going on behind the scenes because she's on screen every second of the project."

She maintained that "a lot of the work that I ended up doing" and "a lot of the conversations that I was having were more of a producer's conversations half the time." Following the global success of the series, Jenna was able to finally persuade the showrunners to let her assume a producer's role. Tim Burton, who execs the show, said he was so thrilled with Jenna that he'd even let her direct episodes. "She's very no-nonsense, and I find that very refreshing and beautiful and artistic," he said. "I saw, from day one, she's very aware. She's more aware, sometimes, than I am."

Season two of *Wednesday* is the sort of hit that has eluded Jenna since she quit the *Scream* saga. But she continues to pursue quirky projects, like the upcoming psychological thriller musical *Hurry Up Tomorrow*, which also stars Abel 'The Weeknd' Tesfaye, and is based on his album of the same name. She'll also be in *Klara And The Sun*, a dystopian sci-fi film drawn from the Kazuo Ishiguro novel about a solar-powered Artificial Friend to a poorly child.

With Paul Rudd in horror comedy *Death Of A Unicorn*

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON; ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY A24, LIONSGATE, PARAMOUNT, NETFLIX, REPUBLIC FEATURES

Of her drive to keep trying new things rather than playing it safe, Ortega told Tesfaye in an interview in *V* magazine: “I think sometimes when you’re a creative person, or you’re in any sort of art field, you kind of just feel this incessant need to keep doing more, keep trying new things, whether that is the medium that you’re practising in or another medium.”

She would like to direct at some point in the future, but next up is an untitled JJ Abrams action movie about which she teases: “I’ve got a couple of action pieces here or there, but I can’t remember the last time I did a job and didn’t get a bruise somewhere.” There are also reports that Jenna is in talks for a remake of 1992’s stalker classic *Single White Female*, albeit with a different title.

She’s also been working on a script for the best part of a decade, as well as developing a couple of other ideas because: “I think oftentimes to get the stories that you want to get made nowadays you kind of have to start them yourself.” Spoken like a true take-charge kind of girl! ■

> “Sometimes when you’re a creative person… you feel this incessant need to keep doing more”

CHAPTER 3

FRIEND OR WOE

A kidnapping, an elite secret society, more visions and another glimpse of the monster – the plot thickens...

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"I could eat Girl Scouts for breakfast. Actually, I have an uncle who went to prison for that."

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

At the end of episode two, Wednesday had a bag placed over her head and now she's tied to a chair – with "no idea if I'm going to live or die; it's definitely my kind of party" – by a bunch of hooded, masked folk whose ringleader is none other than Bianca, and whose members include Xavier.

They've resurrected the elite Nightshade Society 30 years after it lost its charter following the death of a normie kid. They now have parties, camp-outs, virgin Mojitos and the occasional skinny dip, and Principal Weems looks the other way so long as they don't make waves.

Only Nightshade members are allowed in the library, so Xavier suggests they allow Wednesday to pledge, but she's not interested. She's more intrigued by the monster in the woods, Rowan's book and his prediction that she's going to be the cause of Nevermore's demise.

On Outreach Day, students are forced to do volunteer work in Jericho. Wednesday's assignment is to work in antique store Uriah's Heap, as well as performing with the Jericho Marching Band at a ceremony to unveil a new monument in the town square.

Xavier is mad that Wednesday turned down an offer to join the Nightshades after he went out on a limb for her. He's been texting Rowan but hasn't heard back, but he still thinks his former roommate is alive. He tells Wednesday that a picture in the book she's obsessed with features Jericho's founding father Joseph Crackstone. This prompts her to swap jobs with Enid (who says yes because it means she can hang out with Ajax) so she can volunteer at Pilgrim World and learn more about him. ▶

SCARIEST BIT...

At the spooky ruins of the Old Meeting House, Thing almost strangles a homeless man to death – then later in the story the monster finishes the job.

Miss Thornhill is instructed by Weems to keep an eye on "a certain pigtailed upstart" but isn't doing a very good job of it. Sneaking off to Pilgrim World's replica of the town's Old Meeting House with the help of beekeeping society president and new friend Eugene Ottinger, she's spooked to discover a painting featuring the blonde Wednesday-alike from her visions.

At the coffee house she asks Tyler for the location of the original meeting house, which he tells her is a ruin out in the woods frequented by squatters and meth heads. He offers to accompany her, but instead she chooses Thing as her sidekick. At the ruins, Wednesday has a vision in which she sees how the building was burned to the ground by Joseph Crackstone and his torch-wielding cronies, killing a bunch of outcasts – including Wednesday's blonde lookalike, aka her ancestor Goody Addams, sentenced to death for being a witch. Goody escaped the fire, hellbent on revenge.

Wednesday gets another glimpse of the monster that "killed" Rowan, then its footprints morph into a more familiar shape, leading her to conclude: "The monster is human," just as Xavier pops up from out of nowhere. He's beginning to think she was right about Rowan. He also knows about her visions and tells her his dad is the psychic Vincent Thorpe, according to whom visions can't be trusted. She's creating a story in her head, Xavier reckons, and using visions to back it up.

At the ceremony for the unveiling of a bronze statue of Joseph Crackstone,

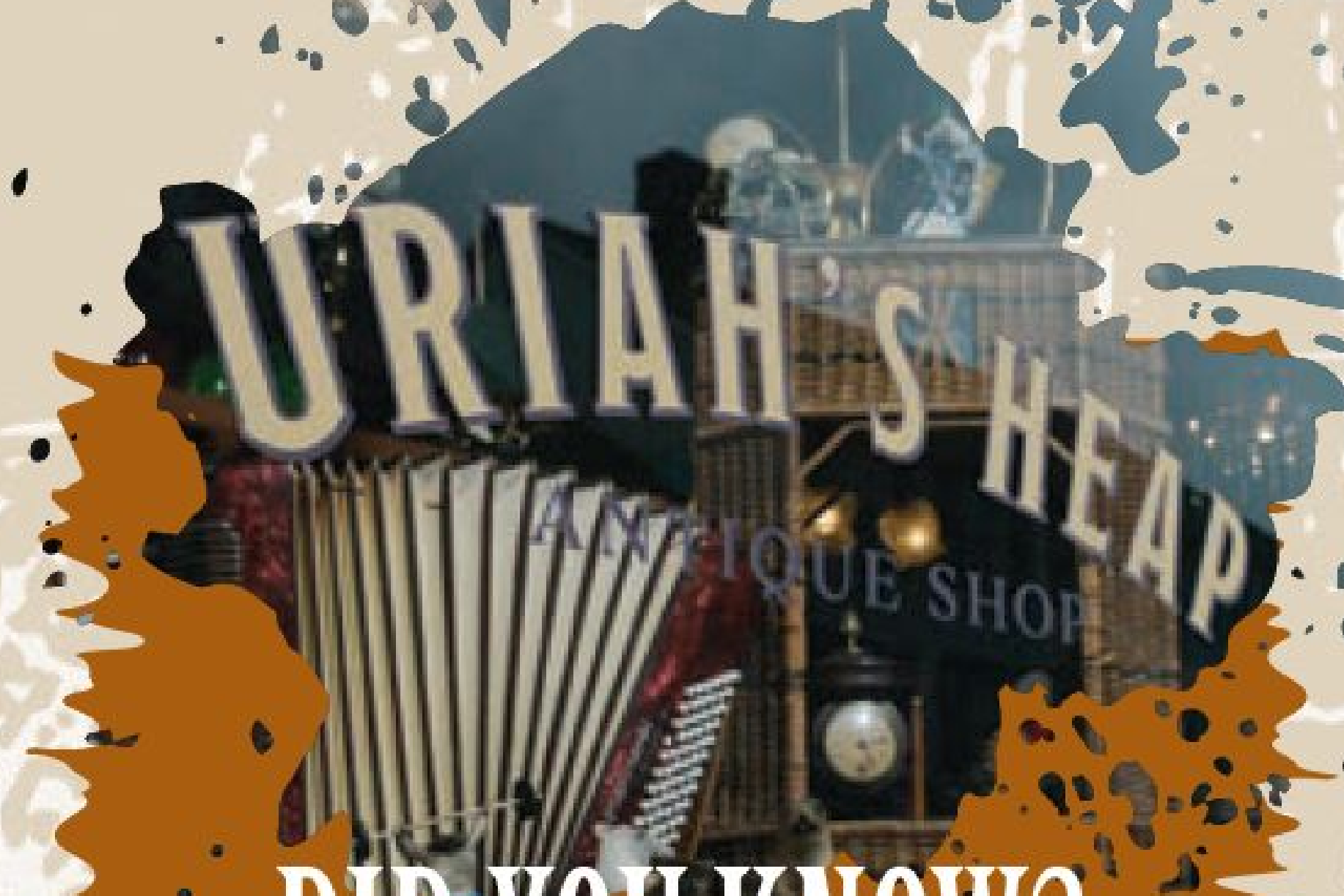
FUNNIEST BIT...

After being questioned by the Nightshade Society members, Bianca orders them to untie her. "I freed myself five minutes ago," she quips, like someone who enjoys being tied up, then laments: "It's amateurs like you that give kidnapping a bad name."

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON; PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

[In German] "Enjoy your 'authentic' pilgrim fudge made with cacao beans procured by the oppressed indigenous people of the Amazon."



DID YOU KNOW?

*** Tyler's line "You rang?" is a direct lift from Lurch's catchphrase from *The Addams Family*.**

*** Antique shop Uriah's Heap is a pun on the character Uriah Heap from *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens.**

*** The classical piece Jenna performs is Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*.**

BEHIND THE SCENES

Thing sets off an explosion to destroy the new monument. An angry Weems blames Wednesday for the incident but she says: "I swear on my late scorpion's soul, my hands are clean." Weems doesn't have any hard evidence but she deems Wednesday to be "a trouble-magnet".

Meanwhile, Enid is excited about a date with Ajax but he's a no-show after he spots his reflection in a bathroom mirror and turns himself into stone, as the Sheriff and his deputy find photographic evidence of the monster. ■

THE MANY LIVES OF WEDNESDAY

MEET THE ACTRESSES WHO PLAYED THE DARK KOOK BEFORE JENNA

With her pale-as-milk skin and jet-black hair, Wednesday Addams is the ultimate young goth queen – and she was around long before Jenna Ortega got to put her own fabulous spin on the character. In fact, the deadpan, morbid, macabre-obsessed schoolgirl first appeared in a series of Addams Family cartoons in *The New Yorker* as far back as 1944 and has since been played on screen and stage numerous times.

Created by cartoonist Charles Addams, the family Wednesday belongs to dates back even further. The hilariously oddball bunch initially graced the magazine's pages in 1938 but weren't given their individual names until the '60s, when they came to be known as parents Gomez and Morticia, their kids Wednesday and Pugsley, plus bald-headed Uncle Fester and witchy Grandmama.

Throw in impossibly tall butler Lurch, a disembodied hand named Thing and Gomez's hair-covered Cousin Itt and you've got one delightfully crazy fam who go about their bizarre business without worrying what outsiders think of them.

The Addams Family hit the small screen in 1964, with Lisa Loring as Wednesday

As he revealed when the clan got their own TV series in 1964, their cartoonist creator called their daughter Wednesday (who was about six years old in her first screen incarnation) after a line in the nursery rhyme Monday's Child that goes: "Wednesday's child is full of woe." She was also full of mischief across the TV show's two seasons, using her brother for scientific experiments, raising spiders as pets and getting Pugsley to behead her Marie Antoinette doll. But even if she was born on a bad-luck Friday 13th, her miserable demeanour is a bit of an act because she often cracks a smile and loves to dance.

> "I loved playing Wednesday because nobody ever told me to smile bigger or do it again but with more enthusiasm"

Lisa Loring played her on telly from 1964 to 1966 across 64 episodes, in a darkly comic sitcom that became a worldwide hit. Asked before her death from a stroke in 2023 if she was anything like the character, the American actress reckoned: "I don't think so, no. I like lace and pearls and pretty things and Wednesday liked everything dark and spooky."

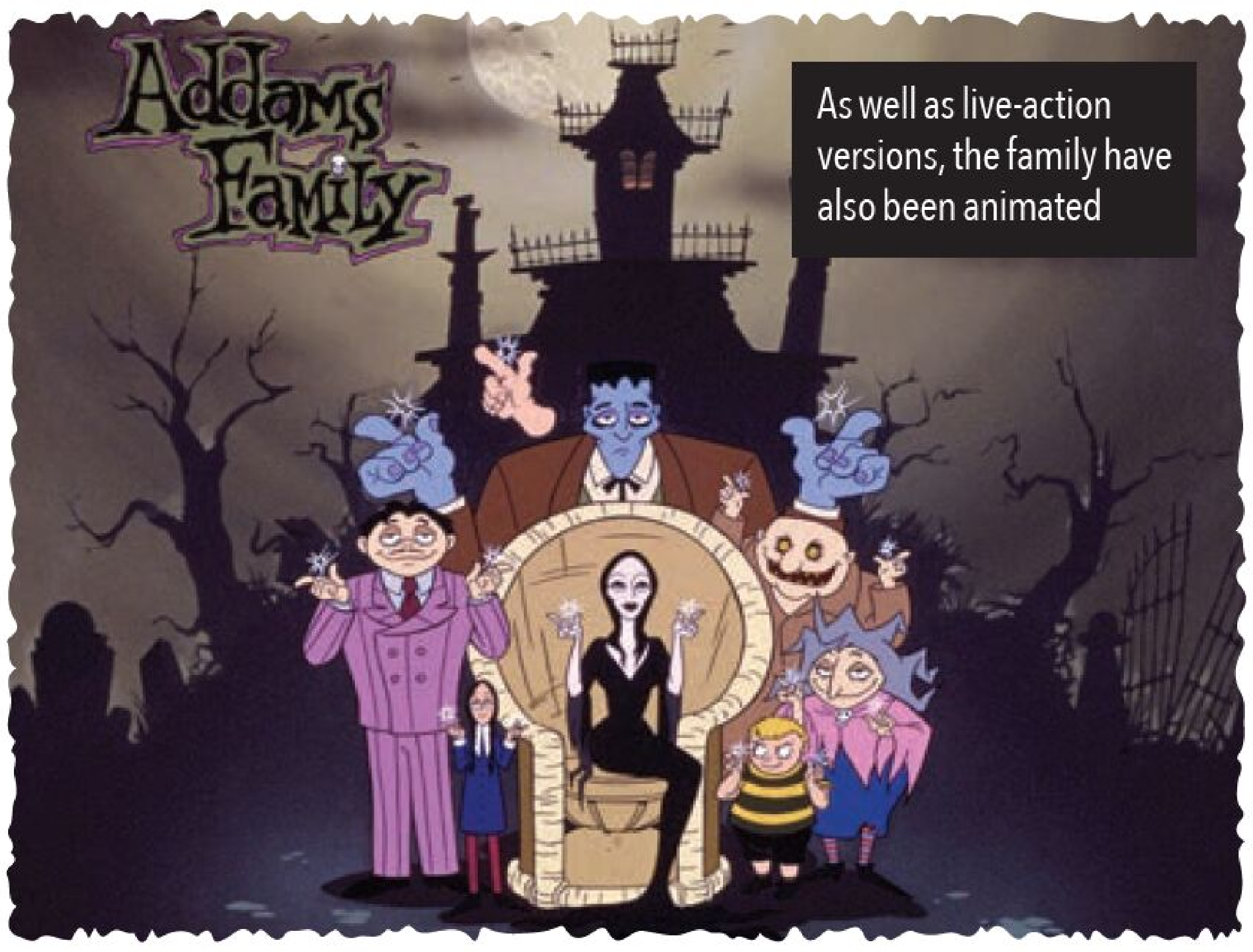
Loring was only five years old when she went in to audition for the part, even though the call was for child actors aged between six and 13. "I didn't know how to read yet [because] I hadn't been to first grade," she recalled, "and they weren't prepared to see children that young." But they made an exception for the young girl in a dress, white gloves and a handbag that her mum picked out for her, and she became part of the family, saying: "You couldn't have picked a better cast and Carolyn Jones and John Astin [who played Morticia and Gomez] were like parents to me. They were great."

Lisa Loring was only five years old at her audition, and hadn't learned to read

Laughing that she got the role "because of my pout", one of her signature scenes went viral decades later when a clip where she teaches Lurch to dance was posted on the internet. The clip even inspired Jenna Ortega's dance on *Wednesday*, with the actress telling a chat show host: "I paid homage to Lisa Loring, the first Wednesday Addams. I did a little bit of her shuffle that she does."

Wednesday was voiced by Cindy Henderson in an animated Addams Family series in 1973, in which the clan go on a road trip around the States in a creaky, creepy camper, causing mayhem wherever they wind up. Then Loring was back as the grown-up goth in a 1977 reunion special called *Halloween With The New Addams Family* alongside two new additions to the family in the shape of Wednesday Jr and Pugsley Jr.

When Christina Ricci came to play Wednesday Addams in the 1991 movie version, the character was a surly, sadistic, sarcastic 13 year old in a blockbuster hit that made Ricci a star. Interestingly enough, the



As well as live-action versions, the family have also been animated

live-action film was due to be directed by Tim Burton – who three decades later chose Ortega as his goth queen heroine – but he was too busy, so Barry Sonnenfeld got the job instead.

Sonnenfeld found Ricci to be wise beyond her years, saying: “Whenever the cast had a problem they would go to Christina Ricci, because she was the most articulate and intellectually gifted of any cast member.”

Aged 11 when the film went into production, she’d aced the audition with a scene that became the most memorable one in it – namely when Wednesday and Pugsley stage a blood-drenched version of *Hamlet*, complete with a gory sword fight, for a grossed-out school audience.

“That’s one of my favourite things I ever shot in my entire 30-plus-year career,” Ricci remembered later. “That was my audition scene. I loved it. Nobody ever asks children to do this and I thought that in itself was super fun.”

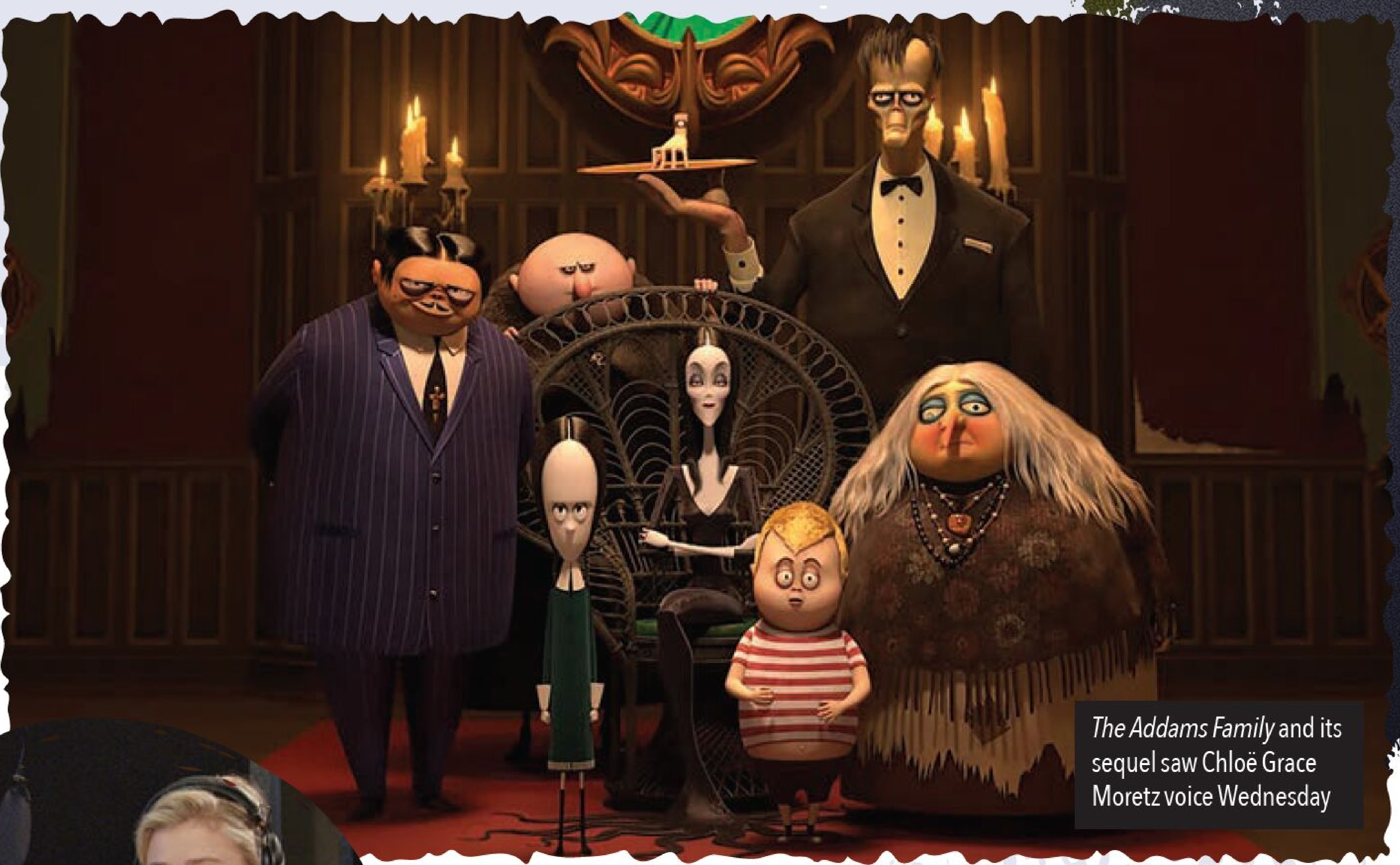
Ricci and Jimmy Workman as Pugsley did fencing training, then when it came to the shoot they had tubes full of fake blood running up their legs and Ricci had a fake arm that could be hacked off. “And it was just great,” she grinned. “I got in trouble, actually, because we would fight like brother and sister. They called ‘cut’ on the last take and I drenched him in the blood that was coming from my neck. And he was very upset about it. He felt that I had embarrassed him in front of an entire audience of people!”

Christina played Wednesday again in the sequel *Addams Family Values* (where she’s even darker and more sarcastic, burying a cat alive and trying to behead her baby brother Pubert) and said of her time on the two movies: “I loved playing Wednesday because nobody ever told me to smile bigger or to do it again but with more enthusiasm. I never had to pretend in the way that I had to at other times when I was a child. The thing about Wednesday that people love so much is that she is someone who is completely allowed ▶

Christina Ricci stole the show as Wednesday in *The Addams Family* and *Addams Family Values*

The New Addams Family ran from 1998-99 and starred Nicole Fugere as Wednesday by her family to be 100% herself. To play somebody who doesn't have to please others felt great."

As for the appeal of the siblings across so many different TV shows and films, she added: "I think that they really tap into our sort of most mischievous nature, especially with children. Just the idea that these people are doing things we're not supposed to do. They're having so much fun in life, living in a way that is wrong or bad but not really hurting anyone. It's fun to see people happy and for the source of that happiness to be so macabre I think is so freeing to people."


The Addams Family and its sequel saw Chloë Grace Moretz voice Wednesday

There was another *Addams Family* TV series in the early '90s and a *New Addams Family* series towards the end of the decade. Then in 2010 the clan were given the lavish musical comedy treatment in *The Addams Family: A New Musical*, which ran for nine months on Broadway before embarking on a North American tour.

Chloë Grace Moretz records her lines as Wednesday Addams

When the musical toured the UK in 2017 it featured rising star Carrie Hope Fletcher as a singing and dancing Wednesday, who wasn't quite as mischievous as in other incarnations and was made older than her brother at age 18. Fletcher related to the goth girl, laughing: "I had a real emo phase when I was about 14. I wore lots of [vintage] Hell Bunny clothing, black lace, skulls and crossbones and stripy purple and black hoodies with cat ears on the hood." And she saw Wednesday as a role model: "She's great because she's such an advocate for being confident and being who you are no matter what anyone says."

In 2019 the goth girl icon was back on the big screen in yet another *Addams Family* film, only this time in animated form and voiced by Chloë Grace Moretz. She was up to her old tricks, this time sadistically trying to bury Pugsley rather than a cat alive. But she was also fed up with being sheltered from the outside world by Morticia and Gomez and even dressed up in colourful clothing for a while before returning to her trademark black as she faced the challenges of going to junior high school with her new friend Parker.

> "Wednesday is a such an advocate for being confident and being who you are no matter what anyone says"

The outside world, she soon discovered, could be even weirder than being an Addams. She was still very much interested in all things dark and twisted but believed: "Her life isn't dark and twisted enough. She finds modern reality even more dark and twisted than her own, which I think is very true."

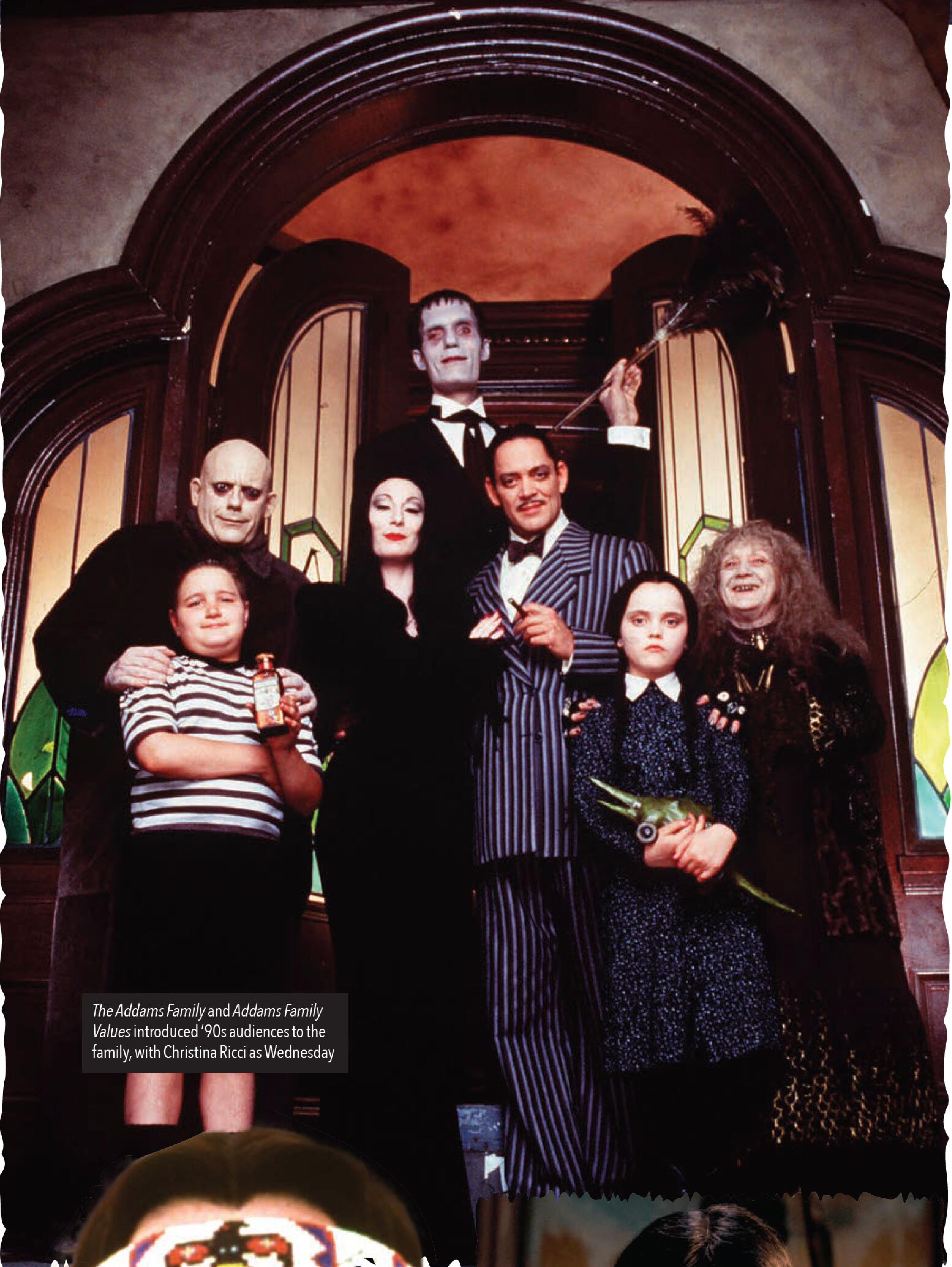
Her pal Parker is being bullied by a girl named Bethany, so Wednesday brings some dead frogs back to life to attack her. As Moretz pointed out: "She walks in and immediately puts her fist up and is ready to rally. She just does so authentically; she doesn't really rely on being the cool kid. She just wants to be herself and tell people to stop bullying other people."

The family made it to Broadway for a musical version starring Brooke Shields

The actress felt teen viewers could relate to Wednesday's rebelliousness. "She's trying to push Morticia's buttons and she knows how to do it and get her mother all riled up, which I think is really indicative of being a teenager across the board. So that was fun to show but it's the opposite of what would normally make your parents mad. For her it's putting on pink clothing and doing a cheerleading sequence, which is what's going to make her mother terrified."

With Oscar Isaac voicing Gomez and Charlize Theron as Morticia, the film was a big hit so naturally a sequel – 2021's rather unimaginatively titled *The Addams Family 2* – was commissioned. Wednesday was now a science nerd with a squid named

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON; ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX, UNIVERSAL



The Addams Family and *Addams Family Values* introduced '90s audiences to the family, with Christina Ricci as Wednesday

Socrates for a pet, and Chloë enjoyed being able to take the character in different directions across the two films. "That was something that was really fun at the start of this," she explained. "I was like: 'How far can I go with my own take on Wednesday?' And they were basically like: 'Go for it and see where that lives with you.' And so I really tried to find my own Wednesday and find something different for audiences because something I really love, when watching remakes, is when people do have their own take on the character. I really wanted to go off my own love of the character and really run with it, and not try and copy anything that had happened before."

The second film wasn't as successful with either audiences or critics but, like Ricci, Moretz saluted Wednesday's individuality and hoped viewers would come away believing "that you can be your authentic self and you will be supported by those that really matter" – just as Wednesday was by a family she sometimes rebelled against, but which always supported her desire (at least once she'd retired the cheerleaders' uniform!) not to conform.

The character taught young people "to stand up for yourself and to not be a part of the social norm [because] there is no such thing as a social norm". As Moretz put it: "I think it's more normal and much cooler to be yourself."

Those are qualities which resonated with the young Ortega, although it was Ricci's take on Wednesday that most stuck with her. Chatting with Christina in *Interview* magazine, Jenna told her idol: "I first saw the '90s films when I was eight or nine and loved them. I could watch them over and over. They're perfect films, honestly, and obviously you're the standout."

Turns out Ortega had always been a bit of a Wednesday herself. "You don't always see it but I have a very dry sense of humour to the point where I get myself in trouble because everyone thinks I'm serious. So I've gotten the comparison to Wednesday a lot and to me that was the greatest honour, especially because after that I became obsessed with Wednesday."

Naturally, when she became Wednesday herself, Jenna was over the moon. And she couldn't believe her luck because also cast in the show – as a botany teacher and dorm mother at the Nevermore Academy – was none other than Christina Ricci herself.■

"To play somebody who doesn't have to please others felt great," revealed Christina Ricci

Jenna Ortega took the character centre stage when Wednesday got her own show

CHAPTER 4

WOE WHAT A NIGHT

Wednesday's break-in at the morgue leads to some rather grim discoveries, before the school dance takes a turn for the gruesome

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"Whoever invented high heels must have had a side hustle as a torturer."

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Wednesday and Thing bust into the morgue. She locates the almost entirely disembowelled corpse of the homeless murder victim, Fabian. Curiously, his left foot is missing. When the coroner and Sheriff Galpin arrive at the morgue, discussing the fact that Fabian's foot (which they've got in a jar – yuck!) is missing two toes, Wednesday hides comfortably in a locker.

Back at her dorm room, she assembles a murder board with the evidence she's accrued so far. All of the victims have had body parts removed, namely a kidney, a finger, a gallbladder and two toes. She's impressed by the fact the killer is collecting trophies like a seasoned pro, but Enid faints at the gruesome info.

At school, the students are buzzed about Saturday's forthcoming dance, The Raven – except Wednesday, of course. She

FUNNIEST BIT…

Wednesday's stone-faced, crazy dance to The Cramps' *Goo Goo Muck* – which later became a TikTok sensation when fans copied her weird and wonderful moves.

spots scratches on Xavier's neck and follows him to a barn-like building in the woods, which is his art studio full of paintings of the monster.

When Xavier discovers her, she throws him off the scent by asking him to take her to the dance and he says yes – which thrills Enid, who takes her shopping for a dress that screams: "Stand back, bitches, I have arrived."

"What kind of dystopian hellscape is this?" Wednesday wonders as Enid takes her to a perky store called Hawte Kewture. She's more drawn to an antique frock in the window of Uriah's Heap. She's also more concerned with getting Sheriff Galpin to team up with her to solve the murders, but he says she should leave the investigation to the professionals, although if he brings her some concrete evidence "then we'll talk". ▶

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"If you hear me screaming bloody murder, there's a good chance I'm just enjoying myself."

BEHIND THE SCENES

Mayor Walker's son Lucas approaches Enid about going to the dance with him, while Tyler is disappointed that Wednesday is going with Xavier. To spare Enid more fainting spells, Wednesday moves her murder board into Eugene's bee farm – where he spots a circle in one of the drawings she pinched from Xavier's studio and says he knows where it is.

He takes her to a cave, where they find bones, handcuffs and a severed claw. Back at Xavier's studio she's hunting for DNA. He catches her and tells her that the creature has been haunting his dreams, which is

SCARIEST BIT....

That bloodbath at The Raven, where Principal Weems, Miss Thornhill and all the partygoers get covered in the stuff. Wednesday susses that it's paint, not real blood, but the downpour ruins their fun and their outfits.

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON; PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX

DONOVAN GALPIN
SHERIFF

the inspiration for his paintings – from one of which claws sprang and scratched his neck. He insists he's not the monster and realises why she really asked him to The Raven.

Sheriff Galpin is impressed by Wednesday's findings, ie the monster's claw and a sample of the suspect's (aka Xavier's) blood. In the meantime, Bianca swoops in to ask Xavier to be her date for The Raven. And an interfering Thing types up an invitation from Wednesday to Tyler, asking him to accompany her to the dance. She quickly slips into the gothic dress that Thing has swiped from Uriah's Heap and Tyler is wowed by her beauty.

When they arrive at the climate crisis-themed dance, the couple cause a stir as a jealous Xavier says he hates her prom date because Tyler and his pals once attacked him. Tyler confesses it's true that he did a terrible thing but he's not a terrible person. They hit the dancefloor, where Wednesday steals the show with her wild and crazy routine. The prom then becomes a bloodbath as Lucas and two of his mates, mad at the Nevermore kids for the explosion at the statue unveiling, feed blood into the sprinkler system and drench the revellers in it.

Ajax proves to be Enid's knight in shining armour, while Wednesday has a vision that Eugene is in danger. He's chased through the woods by the monster and Wednesday finds him covered in blood – and not of the paint variety. ■

DID YOU KNOW?

* Jenna did her dance scene, which she choreographed herself, while suffering from Covid.
* When she refers to a "five-finger discount" she's using slang for shoplifting.
* And when Wednesday says: "They couldn't even spring for real pigs' blood," she's talking about the movie *Carrie*, where the title character is drenched with the stuff at the school prom.

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"I'd rather stick needles in my eyes. I'll probably do that anyway."

"I DON'T OWN WEDNESDAY!"

ICONIC *ADDAMS FAMILY* ACTRESS CHRISTINA RICCI ON PLAYING THE CHARACTER AND WHY SHE RETURNED TO THE UNIVERSE

She began her career playing the iconic Wednesday Addams in *The Addams Family* movie and its sequel, *Addams Family Values*, and for many, Christina Ricci is the iconic version of the sullen, mystical, funny daughter of the extremely unusual family.

Now, of course, she appears in *Wednesday* as Marilyn Thornhill, in a fun crossover for fans of the '90s movies and the new TV show.

But of course, playing Wednesday still continues to be important to Ricci – even now at the age of 45. "Wednesday is still the character I'm best known for. I spent a ton of time in my childhood playing her and she had a huge impact on my career. I spent a ton of time identifying with her and I'm happy that Wednesday is still a huge part of my life," she has said. "It's like a chicken or egg debate. Did I influence her as a character, or did she as a character influence my personality? The way ▶

“Did I influence her as a character or did she as a character influence my personality,” ponders Christina

memory works in childhood, it all blurs. So I don’t have a sense of who I was or what I felt like before I was an actress, essentially.” Perhaps fair enough considering she was just ten years old at the time the first movie came out in 1991.

For now, of course, the character – known for her love of all things morbid and death adjacent – belongs to Jenna Ortega. And for her part, Christina made a conscious decision not to give Jenna any advice about portraying her. “It’s a different character to the one I played,” she said. “You know, I was playing a child. She’s not playing a child, really, more a teenager. I was playing like, a nine year old. I also just feel like, what, because she’s younger than me, she needs my insight? She doesn’t. She doesn’t need anybody’s advice. She was so wonderful in the first season and she’s just such a wonderful actress in general. She’s so talented, but also just has such a great ability to play Wednesday. Wednesday’s been played by so many different people over the years. I’m not comparing it to Shakespeare, but you know how lots of people have played Juliet? It’s like that. I don’t have the same feeling over ownership over the character the way that some people might imagine.”

While many may have wanted her to return to the franchise in the role of Morticia – which ultimately went to Welsh actress Catherine Zeta Jones – instead she took up the character of Marilyn. And her reason for returning was down to the fact it was directed by Tim Burton.

She said: “It’s Tim Burton, I was so honoured to be asked by him because he is just, you know, a genius. And then also to be asked to be a part of the new version of this thing that is a huge part of my identity and my history in my life. I mean, I know they didn’t do it out of the goodness of their hearts, but I was really touched by it, and I felt like it was very nice. And it’s such a fun world, and my character is outrageous and fun and different than anything I’ve done, and it was really great. And I just had a really lovely experience on that with Jenna, who is amazing, and I think now people have a taste of her Wednesday, and it’s going to be fantastic.” Also it gives Christina – who is famous for serious parts in films including *Monster* and *Sleepy Hollow* – the opportunity to flex her funny bone. “It’s such a fun world. I’ve sort of always viewed myself as kind of a natural contrarian. And so being in a world where everybody’s just thrilled to be doing the wrong thing… it’s just great for me, I love it. So that is what that world represents a lot for me, emotionally,” she said.

“It’s Tim Burton, I was so honoured to be asked by him because he is just, you know, a genius”

“I loved the giant glasses that my character got to wear,” revealed Christina

Plus, she also really enjoys getting to play dress up as a teacher at the Nevermore Academy. “I loved the giant glasses my character got to wear – I truly felt like a different person wearing them. Fashion should be fun and transformative. And I’m very lucky that with *Wednesday* and with some red carpet moments I get to do, I’m encouraged to use fashion to help tell these big stories.”

While it has not been confirmed if Christina will be back for season two – and it seems unlikely – she has admitted she may be back, saying: “On my end, the door is open,” adding that she “wasn’t allowed to say” about any more details. So potentially there may be a cameo of some sort? We’ll have to wait and see.

Instead, we will be treated to a whole host of new characters, with the likes of Grandmama played by iconic British actress Joanna Lumley, and fellow Brits Billie Piper and Thandiwe Newton on board to play the roles of Capri and Dr Fairburn respectively. And as we hear from Wednesday in the trailer: “Wherever there’s murder and mayhem, you will always find an Addams…” ■

FEATURE BY STEPHEN LENG

CHAPTER 5

YOU REAP WHAT YOU WOE

The family gets back together and a mystery from the past is finally resolved

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WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

[To Gomez and Morticia] "I've seen jackals with more self-control than you two."

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

On a stormy night 32 years ago in 1990, a young Larissa Weems witnesses a boy's body falling from on high and a young Gomez atop the building brandishing a sword. She informs the Deputy Sheriff that she believes it was all Morticia's fault because Gomez and the boy, Garrett Gates, were fighting over her. Gomez is taken away.

We then flash-forward to Parents' Weekend at Nevermore as Wednesday's parents and brother Pugsley arrive. Principal Weems says that Eugene is on the mend, but in fact he's in a coma. Enid isn't keen on seeing her judgy family while Wednesday greets her clan with disdain and fills them on what has been happening.

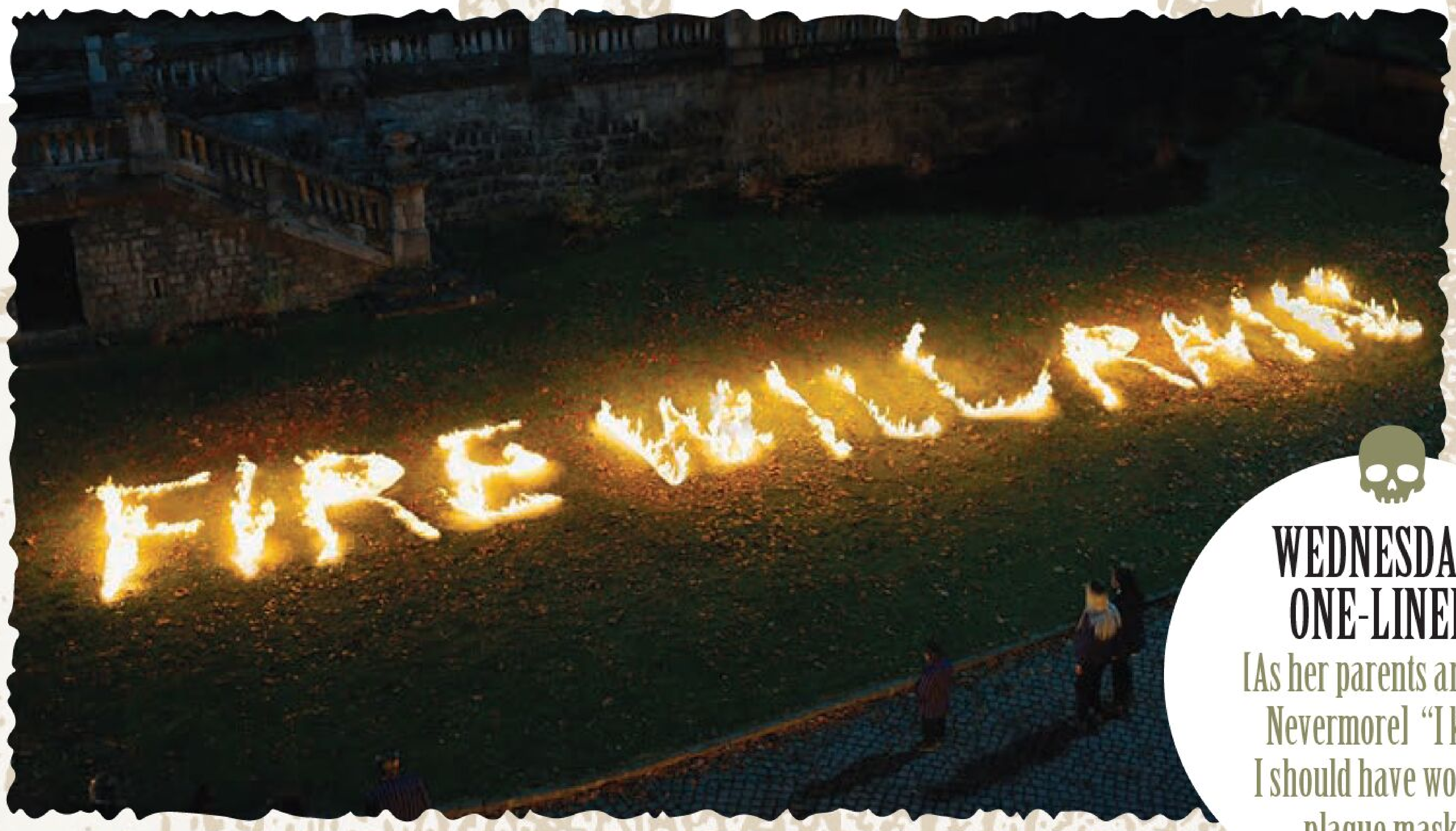
FUNNIEST BIT...

At the therapy session, Pugsley is informed that the crisps he thinks he's been nibbling are actually potpourri (dried petals and spices in a bowl for fragrance).

Weems tells the Addams family that Wednesday's assimilation into school life has been rocky to say the least, so she and therapist Dr Kinbott have agreed that they'd all benefit from a family session. The session is torture for Wednesday. Who, she wants to know, was Garrett Gates? And why was Gomez accused of killing him? Morticia points out that the charges were dropped and protests her husband's innocence, but Wednesday is determined to get to the truth.

Speaking of unhappy families, siren Bianca has a fraught chat with her mum, who has married a man Bianca can't stand. If Bianca refuses to come home, her mum warns her: "Everybody here is gonna know how you siren-ed your way into Nevermore." Later Bianca says she will agree to her mother's wishes but not until the end of term.

At the morgue, Sheriff Galpin is baffled by the coroner's apparent suicide. There's no security footage because the camera was ▶



WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

[As her parents arrive at Nevermore] "I knew I should have worn my plague mask."

BEHIND THE SCENES

obscured by black bubble gum, but there is a suicide note stating that he blew his brains out because he felt guilty for covering up the Garrett Gates case.

Convinced of Gomez's guilt, the Sheriff arrests him and carts him off to jail. When Wednesday comes to visit him, Gomez tells her that on the night of the attack, Garrett – who was obsessed with Morticia – confronted him, a fight ensued and Gomez accidentally stabbed his antagonist. Wednesday tells the Sheriff that her father is innocent but Galpin is having none of it.

Back on campus, having told her mum that she hasn't yet "wolfed out", Enid is distressed to learn that her

SCARIEST BIT....

All those thunder and lightning-filled flashbacks to Garrett Gates' killing and the terrifying blind rage in his eyes just before the deed was done.

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON; PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX

DID YOU KNOW?

* *You Reap What You Woe* is the first episode of *Wednesday* that wasn't directed by Tim Burton.
* The number on Gomez's prison suit is 171912, the birth date of Addams Family creator Charles Addams.
* When Deputy Santiago says: "Guess it's going to be an Addams family reunion in lock-up tonight," she's paying homage to the *Addams Family Reunion* movie.

concerned parents want her to attend conversion camp so that she can realise her full werewolf potential. But Enid eventually puts her foot down and refuses to go.

Wednesday assures a worried Pugsley that everything will be okay, then tells her mum she refused to join the Nightshades because: "I'll never live up to your legacy here, so why try?" Morticia won the Poe Cup four times and captained the fencing team but insists it's not a competition. The Nightshades, she informs her daughter, were founded by Goody Addams to combat Joseph Crackstone's oppression. And Gomez lied; it was Morticia who killed Garrett in self-defence.

After she and her mum are arrested for digging up Garrett's grave, Wednesday reveals he had been poisoned and was already dying when Morticia killed him. His plan, she discovers in a vision, was to use nightshade poison to bump off the entire school. They present the evidence to Mayor Walker, who was part of the cover-up and gives in to their demands for Gomez to be released.

Wednesday tells Morticia about her violent visions. Morticia has them too but hers are positive, while Wednesday sees the world through a darker lens. She warns her daughter to be careful of communing with the spirit of Goody Addams, then gifts her with her old yearbook – which clues her in to the fact Larissa is a shapeshifter who covered up Rowan's murder, but their face-off is interrupted when they discover "FIRE WILL RAIN" written in flames on the lawn. ■

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"On the mend? Try: in a coma."

Gothic horror for the new generation: Why *Wednesday* is the perfect mix of dark and funny

WEDNESDAY DRAWS ON A RICH HISTORY OF GOTHIC HORROR, WITH ENOUGH HUMOUR AND KNOWING REFERENCES TO APPEAL TO A NEW GENERATION

Wednesday sees its star (above) attend the creepy Nevermore Academy (below)

When *Wednesday* premiered on Netflix, it did more than just revive a beloved Addams Family character – it unearthed a treasure trove of gothic horror tradition and reanimated it with a sharp, modern twist.

The show manages a rare feat – it honours the eerie, shadow-drenched legacy of gothic horror while serving up biting humour and relevant themes for Generation Z. The result? A series that clicks with new audiences and Addams Family purists alike.

From its windswept cemeteries to its ivy-covered stone halls, *Wednesday* wears its gothic influences proudly. But these aren't just aesthetic choices. They are deliberate echoes of classic horror cinema – touchstones that viewers both young and old can recognise, whether consciously or not.

Take the Nevermore Academy itself, a boarding school for outcasts that could easily sit alongside the creepy institutions in films such as *The Others* (2001) or *The Innocents* (1961) – both of which echo the ghostly isolation and psychological tension of Henry James's *The Turn Of The Screw*. With its labyrinthine corridors and candlelit dormitories, Nevermore feels like a character in itself, steeped in the tradition of haunted manors seen in gothic classics such as *Rebecca* (1940) or *House Of Usher* (1960).

But it's not just set design that ties *Wednesday* to its gothic roots. The show's very plot – a young woman investigating a series of mysterious murders while uncovering a dark family legacy – evokes the kind of narrative seen in *Crimson Peak* (2015) or *Sleepy Hollow* (1999), the latter of which also featured Tim Burton's trademark aesthetic. These stories often revolve around forbidden knowledge, ancestral sins and supernatural forces lurking beneath the surface of a seemingly civilised world – all of which play a central role in *Wednesday*'s journey.

What makes *Wednesday* remarkable, however, is how it undercuts this darkness with razor-sharp humour. Jenna Ortega's portrayal of Wednesday Addams is a masterclass in deadpan delivery. She's a gothic heroine for the digital age – articulate, brooding and armed with a never-ending supply of scathing one-liners. Her humour doesn't soften the horror, it sharpens it, creating a dynamic tension between dread and laughter. This duality allows the show to poke fun at gothic tropes even as it leans into them.

> Her humour doesn't soften the horror, it sharpens it, creating a dynamic tension between dread and laughter

For instance, when Wednesday says: "I do like stabbing. The social part, not so much," she's channelling the morbid wit that defined the Addams Family of the '60s television show and the '90s movies. But this version of Wednesday is also a self-aware heroine, someone who critiques the very tropes she inhabits. She is the gothic outsider who thrives in a world that has always feared difference – an idea that speaks deeply to younger viewers today.

Wednesday nods to its legacy with a role for '90s Wednesday, Christina Ricci

And that's where *Wednesday* resonates most – in its themes of identity, alienation and empowerment. Teen audiences see themselves in her social awkwardness and rejection of conformity. Longtime Addams Family fans, meanwhile, appreciate the careful balancing act – how *Wednesday* preserves the morbid charm of Charles Addams' original cartoons while expanding Wednesday into a fully realised protagonist.

Moreover, *Wednesday* nods to its legacy with reverence and flair. Christina Ricci, who famously played Wednesday in the '90s films, returns as Marilyn Thornhill, a character whose own twisty arc becomes a love letter to the franchise's past and▶

Lose yourself in the dark, haunted world of these gothic chillers...

THE CABINET OF DR CALIGARI (1920)

This noted German silent film about an insane hypnotist who brainwashes a sleepwalker into committing a series of murders is famed for its iconic expressionist visual style and the bone-tingling sinister performance of Conrad Veidt, who plays the killer.

NOSFERATU (1922)

A silent film adaptation of *Dracula*, known for its eerie atmosphere. Directed by FR Murnau, it tells the story of lawyer Thomas Hutter who travels to Transylvania to conduct business with creepy baldy Count Orlok. In spite of the film's memorable imagery and iconic set pieces (Orlok's shadow ascending the stairs is to this day a haunting sight), Bram Stoker's family took legal action against the filmmakers for copyright issues and ordered them to destroy the prints. Luckily for us, one print survived...

DRACULA (1931)

Almost ten years after *Nosferatu* chilled audiences, Universal Pictures, under the helm of Carl Laemmle Jr, launched what would become a series of classic horror movies with its own version of *Dracula*. Directed by Todd Browning, who would cause scandal a year later helming the twisted circus movie *Freaks*, and starring Bela Lugosi as the iconic vampire, the movie chilled and shocked audiences. The film was followed by a series of sequels including *Dracula's Daughter*, *Son Of Dracula* and even an Abbott & Costello comedy spin-off.

FRANKENSTEIN (1931)

Following the box office success of *Dracula*, Carl Laemmle Jr greenlit a movie version of Mary Shelley's classic horror story about an eccentric scientist hellbent on breathing life into a dead body! The film starred Brit actor Boris Karloff as the resurrected creature who terrified audiences in make-up designed by the legendary artist Jack Pierce. The movie was a huge hit and spawned an even more popular sequel, *Bride Of Frankenstein*.

THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM (1961)

Loosely based on the novel by Edgar Allan Poe, this is a chilling tale of torture and suspense, starring master of creepiness Vincent Price. Set in 16th century Spain, the story is about a young man who travels to a brooding castle in the hope of finding out what happened to his missing sister. But when he arrives at the castle, he makes some shocking discoveries and falls foul of his psychotic brother-in-law, who owns the titular torture device.

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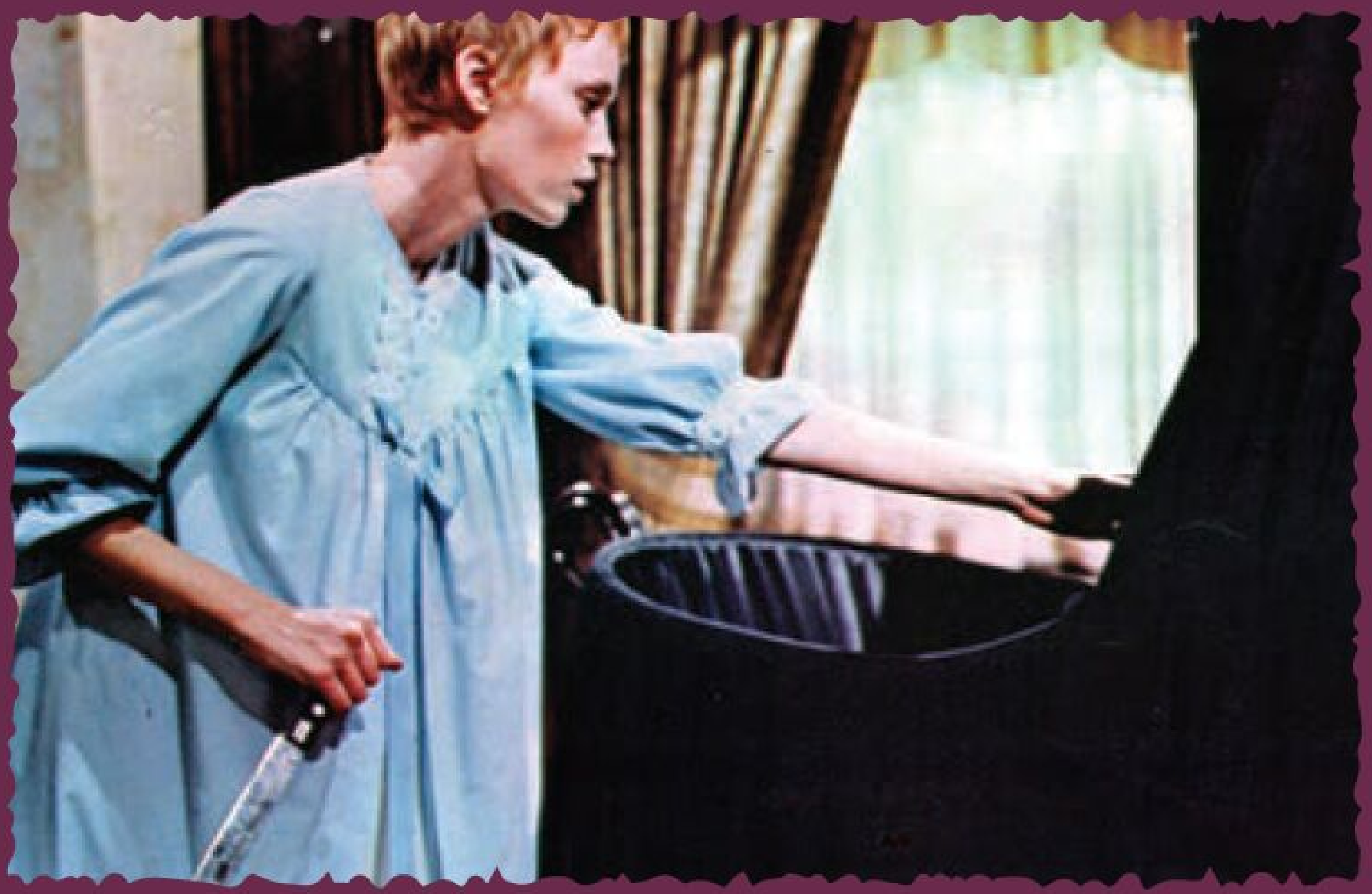


ROSEMARY'S BABY (1968)

Directed by Roman Polanski, this psychological horror film explores themes of isolation, madness and the supernatural. Mia Farrow stars as a newlywed in Manhattan who falls pregnant. However, her joy soon turns to terror when she starts to suspect that her neighbours have their demonic sights set on her unborn child.

INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE (1994)

The movie, based on the novel by Anne Rice and starring Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt, opens in modern day San Francisco with reporter Daniel Molloy interviewing Louis de Pointe du Lac, who claims to be a vampire. During the interview he recalls how back in 1791 Louisiana, the vampire Lestat de Lioncourt turned him into a vampire and encouraged him to stay with him, after turning a young orphan into a bloodsucker too.

THE OTHERS (2001)

A beautiful psychological thriller starring Nicole Kidman as a woman living in an old mansion who tries to protect her children from spooks who are haunting their house. Unsettling and creepy, the much-talked about ending will leave viewers breathless and emotionally wrought.

THE ORPHANAGE (2007)

A Spanish-language chiller about a woman called Laura, who convinces her husband to buy the building that used to be the orphanage she grew up in. However, no sooner have they moved into the building than her sick adopted son Simon goes missing and is later presumed dead. Grief-stricken, Laura thinks she is being contacted by spirits who may or may not be trying to help her track down her son.

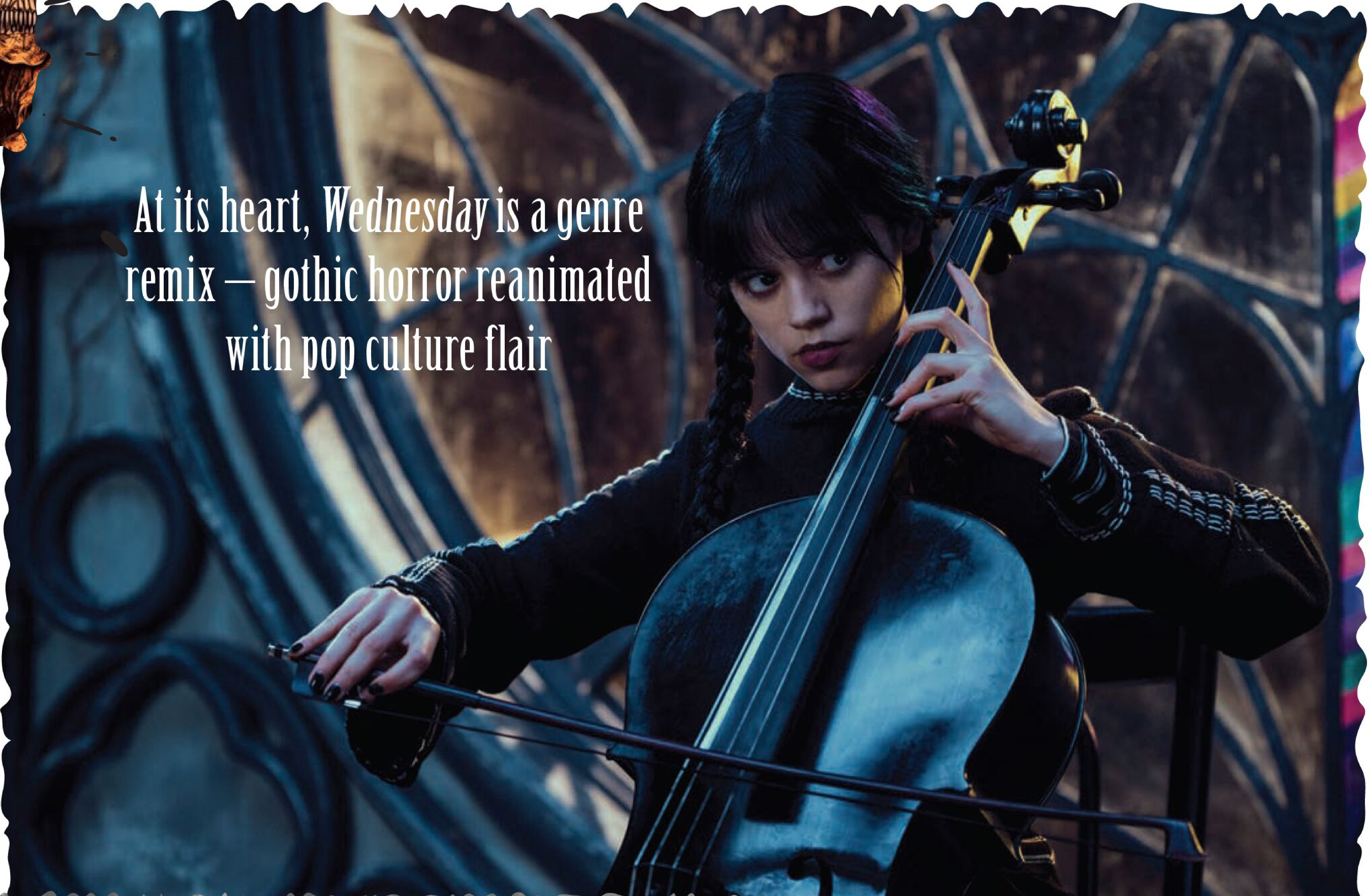
THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE (2018)

A chilling series loosely based on the 1959 book by Shirley Jackson. The story is told in two timelines – one, following five adult siblings whose paranormal experiences at Hill House continue to haunt them in the present day; the other, flashbacks depicting events leading up to the eventful night in 1992 when the family fled from the mansion.

CRIMSON PEAK (2015)

A beautifully shot gothic suspense chiller about a young woman called Edith who marries the mysterious but charming Sir Thomas Sharpe and is swept away to his remote gothic mansion in the English countryside. There she meets Thomas's sister Lucille, who is the keeper of the family's dark secrets. With an ability to speak to the other side, Edith tries to work out why she is having ghostly visions. However, the more she investigates, the closer she comes to a shocking truth.

FEATURE BY NANCY BROWN; ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX



At its heart, *Wednesday* is a genre remix – gothic horror reanimated with pop culture flair

Wednesday (above) pays homage to *The Addams Family* over the years (left and below)

a torch-pass to the future. The inclusion isn't just fan service, it's a symbolic recognition of Wednesday's evolution across generations.

Even Thing, the disembodied hand, receives a gothic glow-up. Stitched, scarred and full of personality, he's a visual homage to classic horror creatures such as Frankenstein's monster or *The Hand* (1960), where body parts take on lives of their own. These references layer the show with rich cinematic allusions that horror buffs can savour while still keeping the story accessible for casual viewers.

At its heart, *Wednesday* is a genre remix – gothic horror reanimated with pop culture flair and filtered through the lens of a fiercely intelligent teenage girl. It invites viewers to explore the shadows, not to be afraid of them. And it reminds us that darkness, when laced with wit and a bit of rebellion, can be wonderfully illuminating. ■

CHAPTER 6

QUID PRO WOE

It's Wednesday's birthday, but of course – in true Wednesday fashion – it proves to be anything but a happy occasion

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

[On her birthday] "Every day is all about me. This one just comes with cake and a bad song."

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Wednesday marks her not-so-sweet 16th with a séance, believing that Goody Addams is the only one who can help her master her psychic abilities. Enid barges in before Wednesday can summon up Goody's spirit, then a note is slipped under the door reading: "If you want answers, meet inside Crackstone's crypt. Midnight."

Once there, Wednesday is unhappy that she's been lured to a surprise party and she's distracted by a Latin inscription on the wall reading: "Fire will rain when I rise." It triggers a vision of Goody, who tells her there's no controlling the "raging river" of her psychic powers and states that her battle as a Raven is a solitary one. Principal Weems tells Jericho's Mayor Walker that she blames Lucas for setting fire to the lawn, given the prank he and his pals pulled at the dance. But Lucas has been grounded for a week, so it can't have been him.

Things are still frosty between Xavier and Wednesday, who hasn't ruled out the possibility that he's been morphing into the monster. But there's some heat between Bianca and Lucas when he asks her on a date, at which point she says they have a lot in common as everyone looks down on them.

In the hospital where Eugene is still in a coma, Wednesday recalls happier birthdays as Dr Kinbott ponders if she's as heartless as she seems. In her vision she saw some gates, which she's jotted down on paper, and Xavier has drawn the same gates; they're at the old Gates mansion. ▶

SCARIEST BIT...

The monster attack at the Gates mansion, although at least Tyler isn't seriously harmed and the marauding creature fails to harm Wednesday and Enid after they seek refuge in the dumbwaiter.

Wednesday ventures to the mansion, narrowly avoiding Mayor Walker as he exits the building. He heads for a meeting with Sheriff Galpin, with Wednesday hiding in the back of his car – only to witness him being run over by a blue Cadillac. Afterwards, an incensed Weems asks Wednesday: "How do you manage to end up at the centre of every terrible thing that happens around here?" as she puts Nevermore under full lockdown.

Miss Thornhill warns Wednesday that she'll be expelled if she continues to defy the Principal, but she hatches a plan, duping Tyler into meeting her at the school gates and roping Enid along for the ride. Tyler's dad warns him to stay away from the troublemaker but he goes along anyway.

She gets Tyler to drive them to the Gates property. In the garage they discover the car that ran over Mayor Walker, and in the mansion there's a secret shrine to Crackstone behind a wall of books, with "BLOOD WILL RAIN WHEN I RISE" daubed on the walls. The candles are still warm but before they can find out who lit them the monster attacks Tyler, and Wednesday and Enid – taking refuge in a dumbwaiter – end up in a cellar that's home to all those missing body parts from the monster's victims.

They rescue a wounded Tyler just as Xavier arrives at the scene, but when Wednesday urges Sheriff Galpin to check out the cellar all the incriminating evidence has vanished. He's fuming and forbids her from seeing Tyler or pursuing the case.

Wednesday tells Weems that she doesn't think she's destined to destroy the school, she's destined to

FUNNIEST BIT...

Enid and Wednesday head over to inspect Crackstone's crypt. It's all a ruse, though, as it turns out there's a surprise party for Wednesday. She is presented with a grim reaper cake, and Thing even wears a jaunty party hat for the special occasion!

Happy 16th Birthday
Wednesday

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON; PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

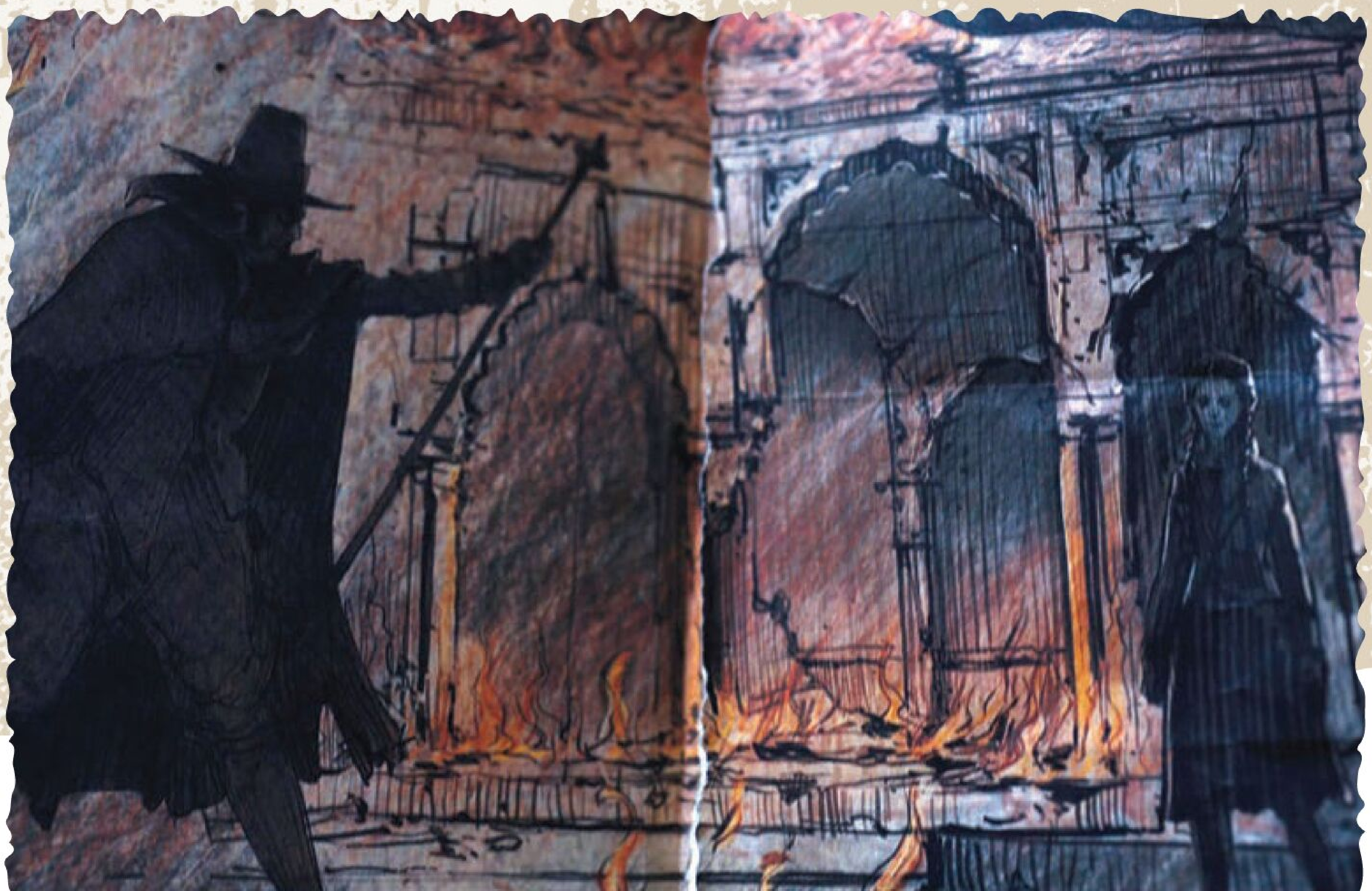
"What part of: 'No party under the penalty of death' do you not understand?"

DID YOU KNOW?

* When Christina Ricci's Miss Thornhill tells Wednesday that they're alike, it's an inside joke because Ricci played Wednesday on the big screen.

* And gaffe alert: When Wednesday visits Xavier's studio, the painting that she pinched has mysteriously returned itself to the wall.

BEHIND THE SCENES



save it. The Principal gives her one more chance, after which she'll be expelled, while a rattled Enid moves in with Yoko. She's tried hard to be a friend to Wednesday but has had enough.

After Goody warns Wednesday that she was destined to be alone, now she is. At the Gates mansion, she pinches a music box and when she opens it out fall a bunch of photos that only a stalker could have taken. She vows that she won't be intimidated, while in the hospital someone sabotages Mayor Walker's life support system. ■

BURTON DIGS UP THE DEAD... AGAIN

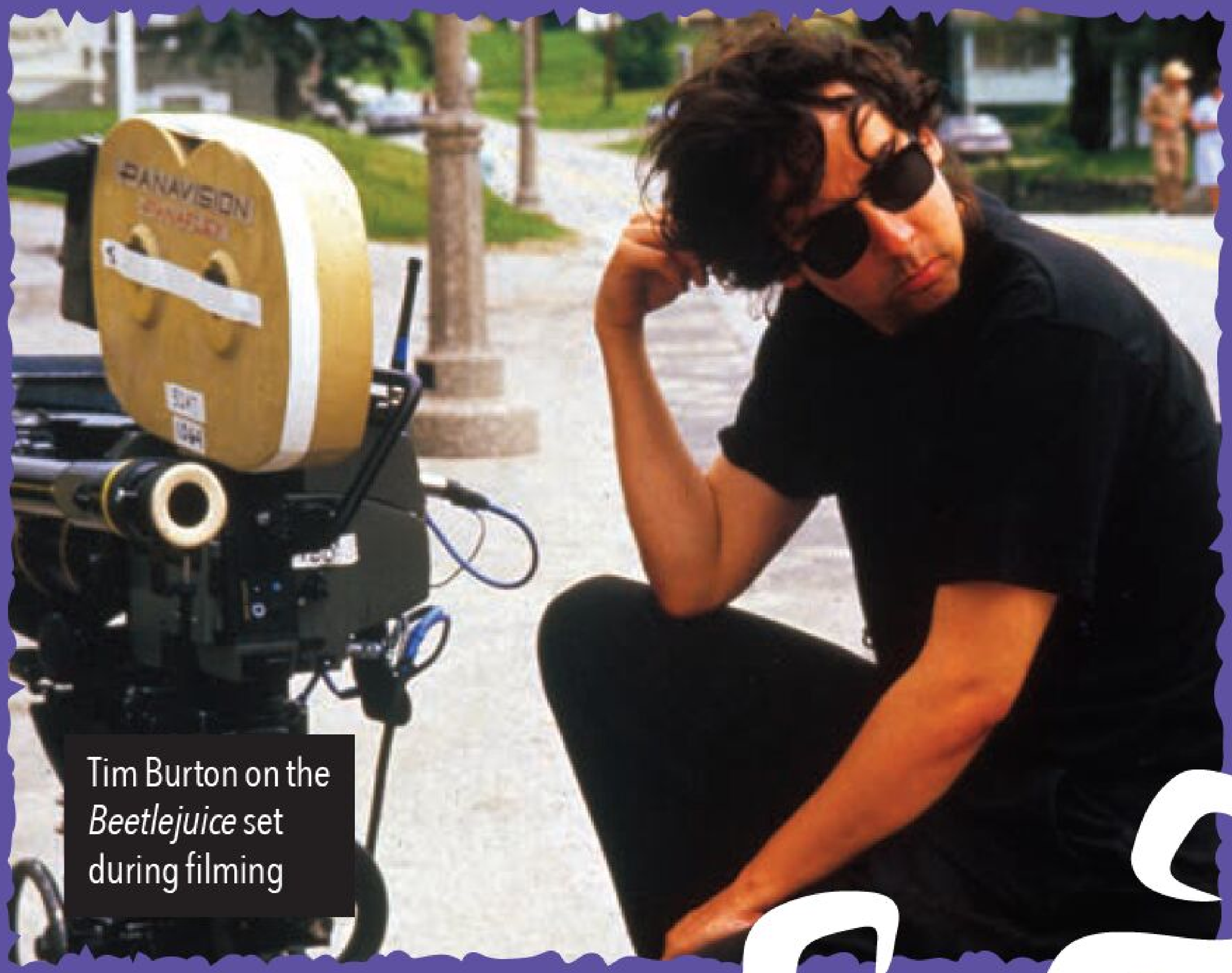
AFTER THE SUCCESS OF *BEETLEJUICE*, IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT THE FILM WOULD RETURN FOR A SEQUEL... EVEN IF THE DIRECTOR DID MAKE EVERYONE WAIT!

Jenna wasn't even born when the first *Beetlejuice* film came out in 1988 and proved that the success of Tim Burton's first directorial effort – 1985's *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure* – was no one-off. The spooky comedy brought in nearly $75 million at the box office and led to Burton being offered Warner Bros' *Batman* reboot, which also turned his *Beetlejuice* leading man Michael Keaton into an international star.

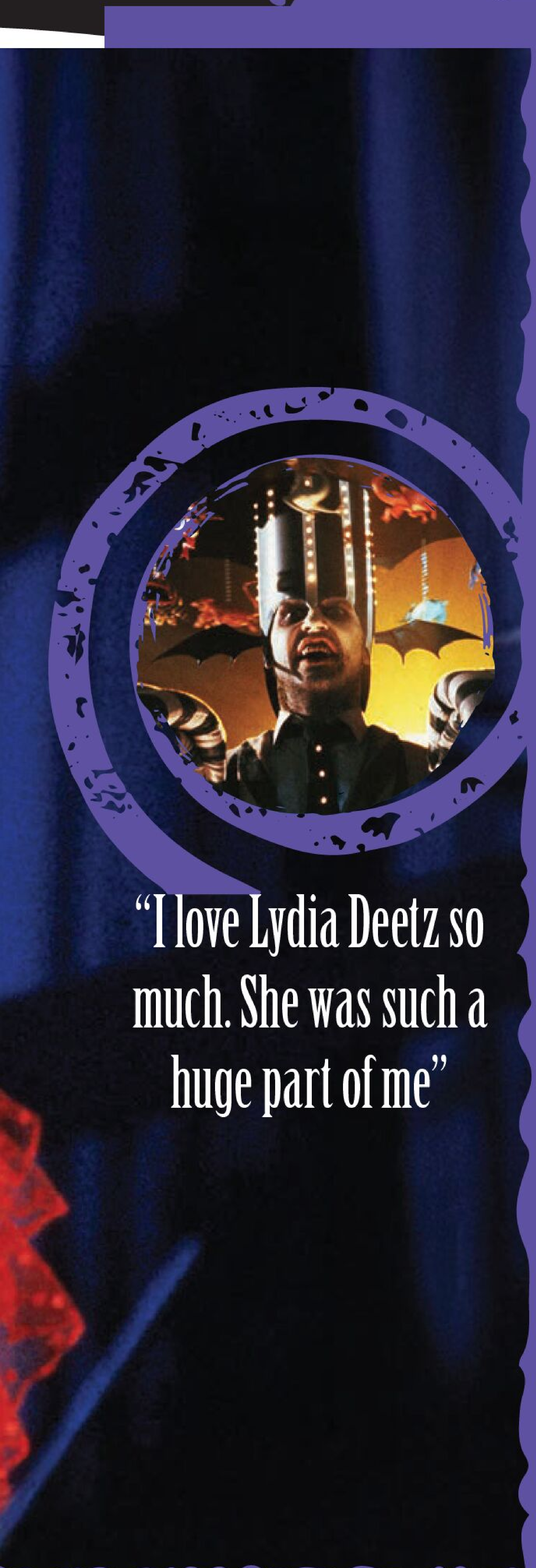
California-born Tim grew up making short films and, after graduating from high school, studied animation. That led to him getting a job as an animator, graphic designer and art director at Walt Disney Productions. He made a couple more short features, one of which – *Frankenweenie*, in which a young boy brings his dead dog back to life – impressed comedian Paul Reubens enough for him to enlist Burton as the director of the Pee-Wee Herman spin-off film.

The movie, about Reubens' loveable man-child's adventures on a cross-country search for his stolen bike, cost $7 million to make and reaped more than $40 million in America alone. So naturally Warner Bros were happy to finance *Beetlejuice*. The script was originally dark and disturbing but Burton turned it into an eye-popping horror comedy with Keaton as a 'bio-exorcist' named Betelgeuse who specialises in ridding homes of ▶

The first *Beetlejuice* film brought together Michael Keaton and Winona Ryder



Tim Burton on the *Beetlejuice* set during filming



> “I love Lydia Deetz so much. She was such a huge part of me”

Beetlejuice’s Geena Davis and Alec Baldwin as Barbara and Adam Maitland

THE BEST OF BURTON

Tim’s filmography is almost unanimously kooky – particularly his modern blockbusters, which share a certain high-gloss weirdness. But to analyse his lesser-known films, and the sub-genres of kooky he’s mastered, from the subtly unconventional to the outright zany and the uncomfortably macabre, is to truly understand his genius…

BATMAN (1989)

Unprecedented in tone, style and cultural impact at the time, Burton’s sombre first *Batman* movie put paid to the camp of the comic books and TV shows that preceded it, seducing audiences with its seriousness. Here, star Michael Keaton plays it unrelentingly straight, his deadpan manner lending the character an enduring, monolithic power. It’s still ridiculous, of course – it’s about a billionaire in a sculpted rubber body suit, after all – but through this formal filter, the film boasts an air of plausibility. Its shadow looms large: the character’s greatest hits – from *The Dark Knight* trilogy (2005-2012) to *The Batman* (2022) – are clearly indebted to it.

EDWARD SCISSORHANDS (1990)

It speaks to Burton’s prolificacy – 20 feature films over 40 years – and repeated box office smashes like *Alice In Wonderland* and *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*, that his quieter key, more left-of-centre offerings such as the sublime *Edward Scissorhands* are remembered for different reasons: namely, their cult status. Featuring frequent Burton collaborators Johnny Depp and Winona Ryder, *Edward Scissorhands’* extreme imagery forms a unique tension with its gentle, melancholic storytelling. A gothic fairy tale for the ages.

BATMAN RETURNS (1992)

Long before MCU-style film franchises began insulting audiences with paint-by-numbers monotony, Tim Burton pulled the rug from under us with a sequel wildly different from its predecessor – weirder, wackier, edgier, utterly maximalist, and yet as unmistakably adult as the first one. From Danny DeVito's grotesque Penguin to Michelle Pfeiffer's arch, sexually charged Catwoman (she's got more charisma than 50 drag queens), few blockbusters are as outré as this.

MARS ATTACKS! (1996)

When a star is synonymous with a single role, like Sarah Jessica Parker and *Sex And The City*'s Carrie Bradshaw, it can be a joy to search their screen credits for hidden gems: in this batty sci-fi comedy, she plays Nathalie Lake, a fashion journalist whose head ends up transplanted onto the body of her pet chihuahua. Self-consciously corny, *Mars Attacks!* makes a farce out of a story of alien invasion and showcases Burton at his most unabashedly eccentric. It was a gear change, too, with the director swapping his usual darkness for explosions of colour and pop art aesthetics, proving he's no one-trick pony.

Catherine O'Hara, Jenna Ortega, Winona Ryder and Justin Theroux

unwanted human inhabitants so ghosts can reside there in peace.

Dead for hundreds of years, he lives in a miniature model town but can be summoned if you say his name (pronounced Beetlejuice) three times. Newly deceased car crash victims Barbara and Adam Maitland (Geena Davis and Alec Baldwin) do just that when a new family move into their house and soon wish they hadn't. He's an obnoxious prankster who dresses in shabby clothes and stripey suits, can make his head spin around, transforms into a snake, eats bugs and generally causes mayhem.

At first the Deetz family aren't aware of what's going on. Well, parents Charles and Delia (Jeffrey Jones and Catherine O'Hara) aren't, but their "strange and unusual" daughter Lydia (Winona Ryder) is a goth – inspired by Wednesday Addams, perhaps? – who can see ghosts and communicate with them. Soon she's working with Barbara and Adam to try and send Betelgeuse back to the afterlife.

Made for $15 million, *Beetlejuice* was one of the biggest hits of 1988 and a sequel seemed inevitable, except Burton and Keaton were committed to the first of two *Batman* movies. Instead fans had to settle for an animated TV show, in which the ghoulish title character and Lydia Deetz teamed up for supernatural escapades and which ran for four seasons from 1989 until 1991.

Fun fact: In 1998 the original film was the first DVD ever sent out by a mail-order company called Netflix (which as we all know went on to become a major streaming platform and brought us the *Wednesday* TV show). There were also *Beetlejuice* video games and a musical version played on Broadway before touring the US. It has been performed in South Korea, Brazil and on a Norwegian cruise ship too, so it's surely only a matter of time before it makes it to the UK.

The movie sequel finally made it to the big screen – *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice* opened last year, with Jenna appearing as Lydia Deetz's daughter Astrid. She said during an Emmy red carpet chat that filming it with her new pal Tim Burton as director was "some of the most fun I've ever had on a set". ▶

Michael Keaton receives direction from Tim Burton on set

The sequel was talked about for many years before it finally happened

The sequel also reunited Ortega and Burton with *Wednesday* co-creators and writers Alfred Gough and Miles Millar. And it brought back Michael Keaton, Winona Ryder and Catherine O'Hara, alongside new additions Monica Bellucci as Betelgeuse's wife and Willem Dafoe as a ghostly detective, as well as Justin Theroux, Arthur Conti and Burn Gorman.

The follow-up film was a long time coming. Two years after the original was released, Tim came up with an idea for *Beetlejuice Goes Hawaiian*, which would have seen the Deetz family moving to Hawaii so Charles can set up a holiday resort, only for him to discover that it's on an ancient burial ground. Keaton and Ryder were interested in signing on as long as Tim was back as director, but then he and Michael found themselves busy making *Batman Returns*.

The script went through several rewrites over the next few years before Ryder was deemed too old to play the young Lydia. In 2011 a new screenplay was commissioned, to be written by Seth Grahame-Smith, who worked with Burton on *Dark Shadows* – and a couple of years later it seemed as if *Beetlejuice 2* was a goer, with Winona letting slip: "I'm kind of sworn to secrecy but it sounds like it might be happening. It's 27 years later. And I have to say, I love Lydia Deetz so much. She was such a huge part of me. I would be really interested in what she is doing 27 years later."

The actress – who went on to become a Hollywood A-lister and Oscar nominee for *The Age Of Innocence* and *Little Women* as well as the star of *Stranger Things* – always held *Beetlejuice* close to her heart. And she understood why some fans might be concerned about Warner Bros revisiting such a comedy classic. "It's a very precious movie to people, so there are a lot of people who are like: 'Don't!'" But again, she'd only do it if Burton and Keaton were also on board as a guarantee of quality. And the director seemed to be keen, saying

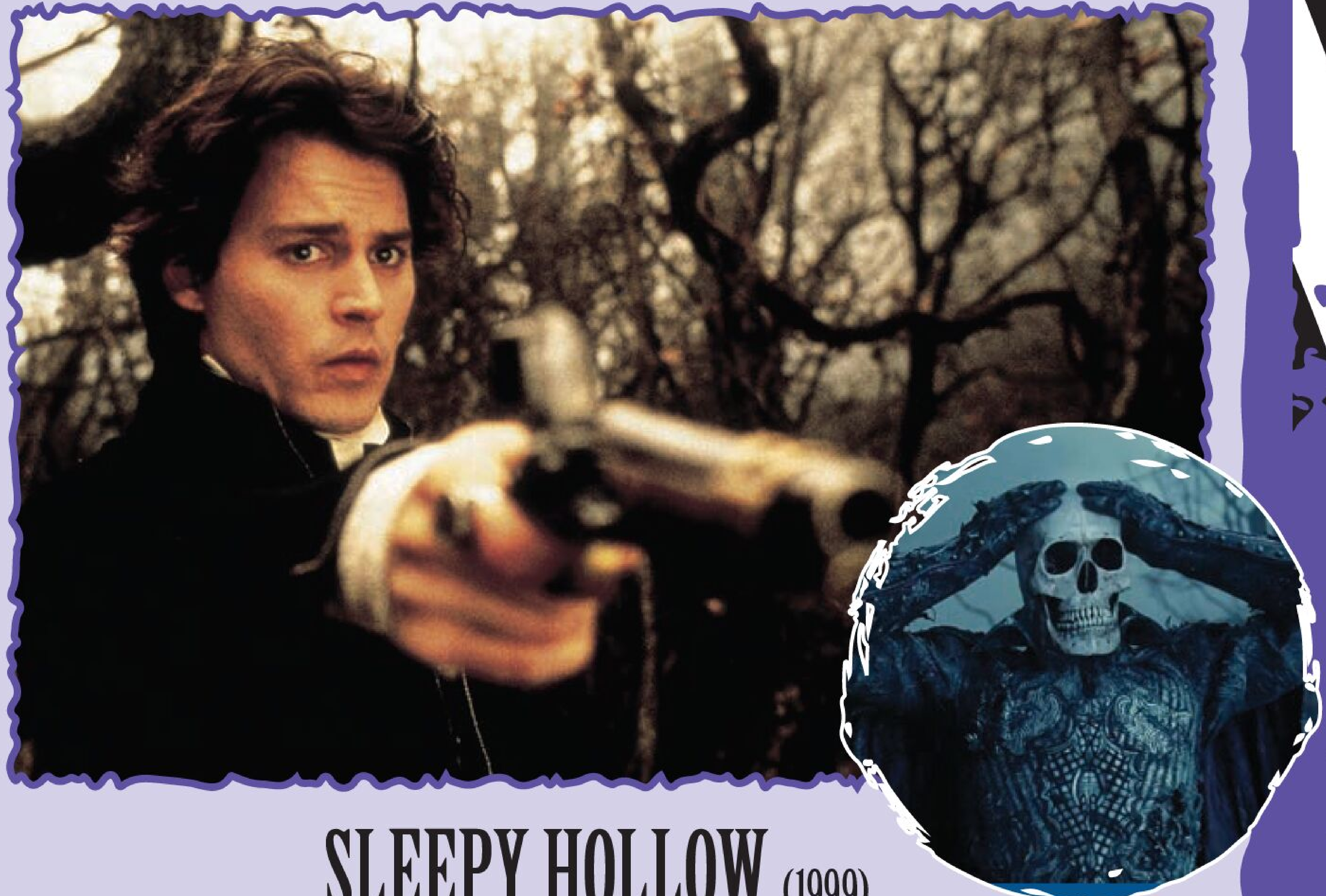
▶

Jenna said filming was "some of the most fun I've had on set"

The sequel sees chaos unleashed once again on Winter River

"He already looked like he was 150 in the first one"

Michael Keaton returned in his character's familiar make-up and striped suit



SLEEPY HOLLOW (1999)

Mars Attacks! marked a stark change in style for Burton, but it was still loaded with his trademark pulpy humour. *Sleepy Hollow*, on the other hand, is a return to dark *Batman*-era form, both in shadowy aesthetic and a high-minded humourlessness verging on dour – and the bone-chilling terror is all the more potent for it. Herein lies an exercise in a small measure of kookiness going a long way: there's some stylised imagery – the supernatural woodland, for instance, is a trip – and the story, based on Washington Irving's 1820 tale, is rooted firmly in fantasy. Elsewhere, though, with its muted colour palette, you could at times mistake *Hollow* for a highfalutin period drama… which makes the frequent graphic violence all the more confronting. Here, a blonde Christina Ricci, known for her intensity and severity, plays against type as the film's softest, kindest figure. This hugely underrated film would make for an electrifying stage show.

PLANET OF THE APES (2001)

What happens when an auteur's vision is compromised by studio interference? We can only speculate that this was the reason for this rare critical misfire for Burton, but for sure, the strong cocktail of action spectacle, campy silliness and gritty sci-fi was too much for the comparatively weak plot and underwritten characters. Despite being a box office draw, a planned sequel was cancelled, and the series was rebooted ten years later to great success. As such, Burton's effort has all but faded into obscurity. Still, it's a fascinating relic, through which its creator's counter-cultural essence still shines through.

BIG FISH (2003)

At heart a pathos-filled drama about a son reconnecting with his father on his deathbed, this is Burton's warmest film, and perhaps a calling card for why he does what he does: fantasy, the film seems to say, is a coping mechanism, a way to soften life's hardest truths. Indeed, Burton imbues *Big Fish* with whimsy by making the latter character an outlandish storyteller who blends fact with fiction to create new, deeper meanings. Tissues at the ready.

SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET (2007)

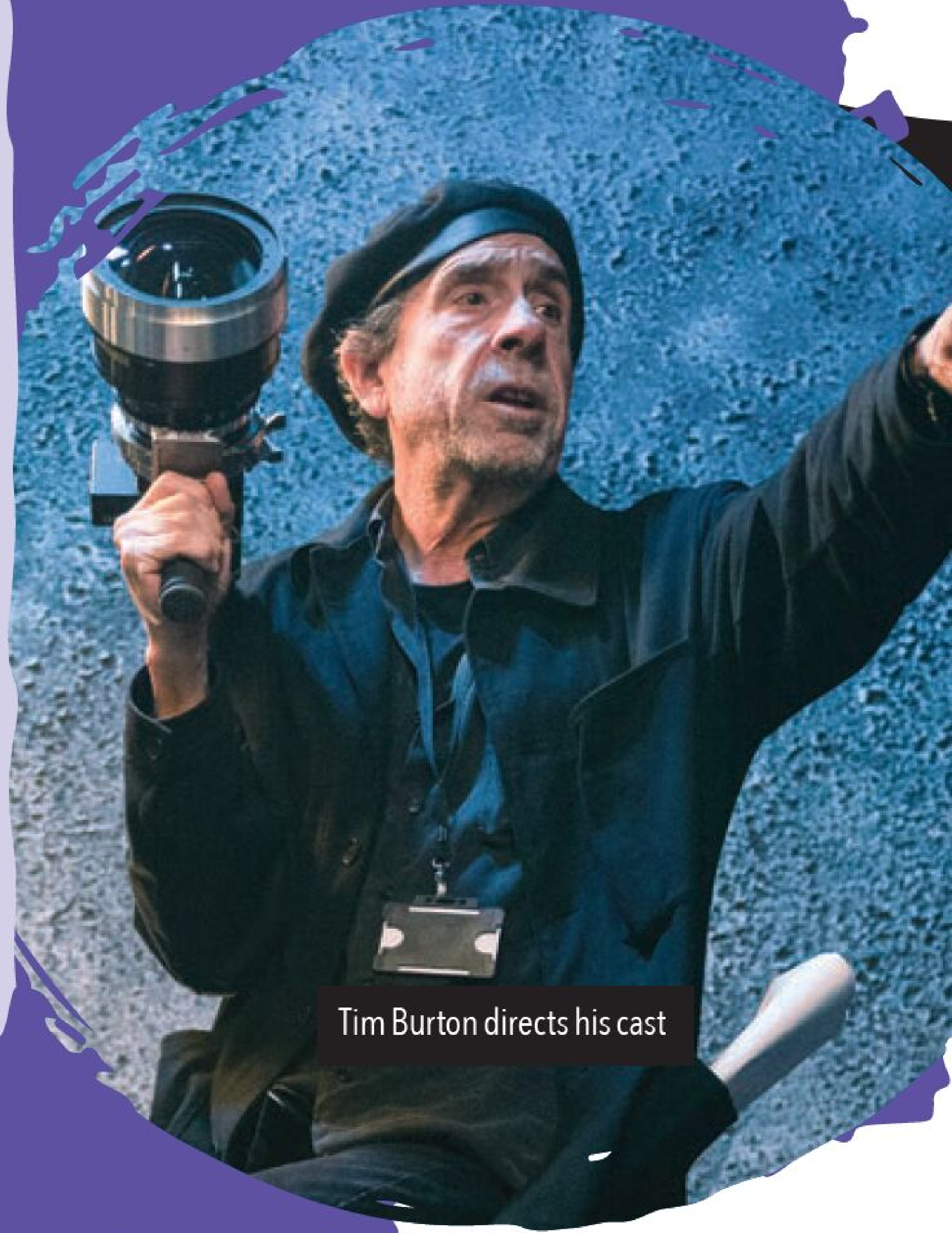
If *Sleepy Hollow* was violent, there are no words to describe the kills of *Sweeney Todd* – save for, perhaps, "full-blown blood opera". This is Burton at his most heightened and horrific, but while the *Saw* and *Hostel* films of the decade raced to the bottom of a barrel marked "gratuitous", there's a haunted elegance to the bloodshed in this film, based on an icky fictional character who first appeared in a penny dreadful serial in 1846. A mass appeal oddity soaked in grief and sorrow.

DUMBO (2022)

Many Disney classics are darker in tone than they seem, but not the sweet, straightforward *Dumbo*. Thus, many were sceptical when Burton was tapped for the live-action remake. Their concerns were valid – Tim's bleak atmosphere alienated kids and overwhelmed the emotional simplicity of the story. Still, it's compelling to see what he did with his biggest budget yet – a cool $170m. It's as visually arresting – and dark! – as any of his best work.

"We're doing it exactly like we did the first movie," declared Michael Keaton

"What happens to people we see at one stage in their life, then you see them many years later?"



Tim Burton directs his cast

in 2014: “It’s a character that I love and I miss actually working with Michael. There’s only one Betelgeuse. We’re working on a script and I think it’s probably closer than ever, and I’d love to work with him again.”

Seth Grahame-Smith announced in early 2015 that the script was done and filming would begin at the end of the year, with Keaton and Ryder both returning to continue the story. Burton had also confirmed, while doing press for his film *Big Eyes*, that it was all systems go. As Winona said on a chat show that August when asked about the sequel: “I think I can confirm it because Tim Burton did this interview. It was very hush hush, top secret and then he was doing some press for *Big Eyes* and he did an on-camera interview and he said: ‘Oh yeah we’re doing it and Winona’s going to be in it.’”

And Keaton told MTV: “I’ve emailed Tim a couple of times, talked to the writer a couple of times, but all really, really preliminary stuff. I always said that’s the one thing I’d like to do again, if I ever did anything again. But it kind of required Tim to be involved some way or another.” ▶

Catherine O’Hara was among the original cast returning for round two

But in May 2016 the director did a U-turn, saying: “It’s something that I really would like to do in the right circumstances but it’s one of those films where it has to be right. It’s not a kind of a movie that cries out [for a sequel], it’s not the *Beetlejuice* trilogy. So it’s something that [we’d do] if the elements are right, because I do love the character and Michael’s amazing as that character, so yeah we’ll see. But there’s nothing concrete yet.”

Yet another writer came on board in 2016, only for Warner Bros to say in 2019 that they’d decided against going ahead with the project. Then guess what? In 2022 it was announced that *Beetlejuice 2* was back on, to be produced by Brad Pitt’s Plan B Entertainment company, with Warner Bros distributing it. In October that year Burton said he wasn’t involved, then teased a few days later “nothing is out of the question” elaborating: “I only know if I’m making a film when I’m actually on the set shooting. I am working on ideas and things but it’s all very early days. We’ll see how it goes.”

It must have gone well because by May 2023 Tim was yelling ‘Action!’ on set in London. Other locations included a college in Hertfordshire.

Of working with *Beetlejuice*’s goth icon, Jenna gushed: “Winona is just the loveliest, sweetest, just one of my favourite people I think I’ve ever met. I love her a lot and I felt really grateful to get to know her and work with her. She is just an angel on this planet.”

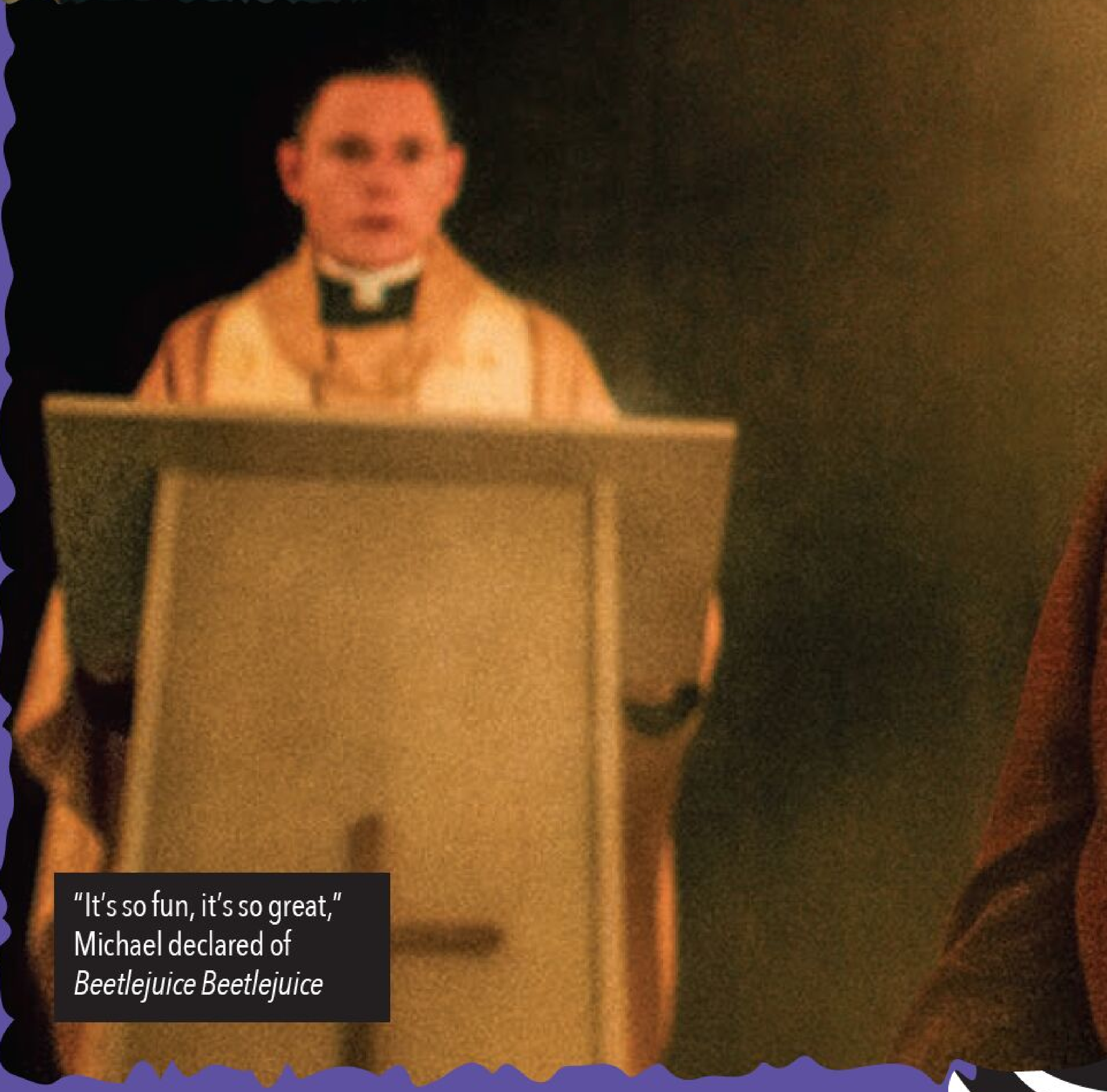
More filming was done in the town of East Corinth in Vermont, where the original film’s outdoor scenes were also shot, but had to be halted that July because of the Hollywood actors’ strike. “I feel grateful we got what we got,” Burton said during the hiatus, which put the production behind by a minimal amount. “Literally, it was a day and a half. It is 99% done.”

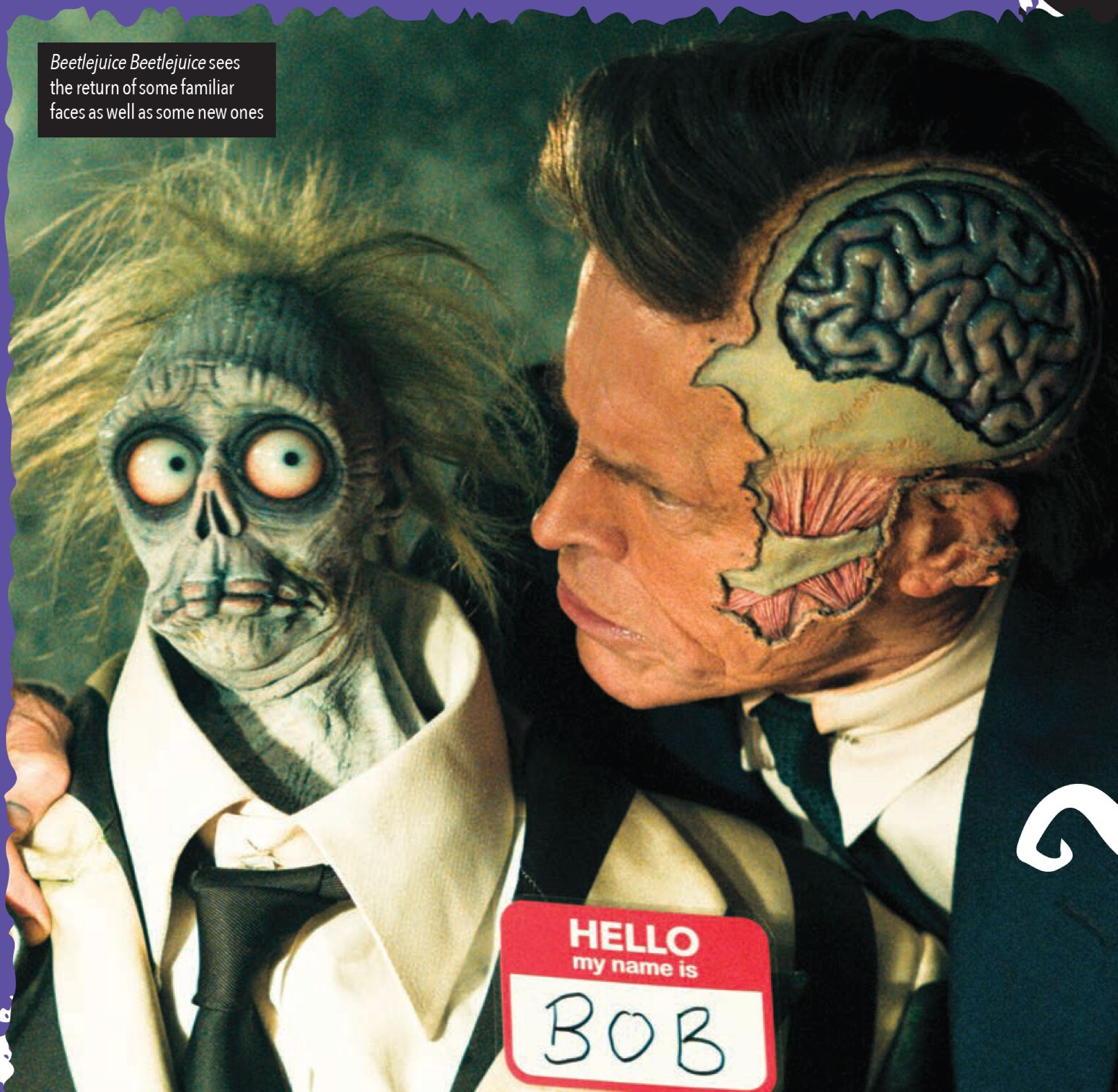
The remaining one percent was finished that November and the director was happy with the experience, saying: “I really enjoyed it. I tried to strip everything and go back to the basics of working with good people and actors and puppets. It was kind of like going back to why I liked making movies.”

“I love Lydia Deetz so much,” Winona has said about her character

He hoped audiences would share his interest in the Deetz family. “When I did this one I didn’t look at the first movie because it didn’t feel like it would help. I treated it just very much as a project where, after 35 years, the anchor for me is what happened to Lydia, what happened to the Deetz family? What happened to the living people? What happens to people we see at one stage in their life, then you see them many years later?”

Costume designer Colleen Atwood hadn’t worked on the original *Beetlejuice* but she revealed that the bio-exorcist’s iconic black and white striped suit would be back, while composer Danny Elfman added: “He’s not even going to look that much different. That’s the beauty of the Betelgeuse make-up. He already looked like he was 150 in the first one.”


“It’s so fun, it’s so great,” Michael declared of *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice*


Beetlejuice Beetlejuice sees the return of some familiar faces as well as some new ones

> “Everyone did an incredible job. It was insane and I can’t wait for people to see it”

Joining him in the ranks of the living dead was Willem Dafoe as a spirit detective, with the actor revealing: “So I’m a dead person. And in life I was a B-movie action star but I had an accident and that’s what sent me to the other side. But because of my skills, I became a detective character in the afterlife.”

Keaton was thrilled to be back: “*Beetlejuice* is the most f***ing fun you can have working. It’s so fun, it’s so great. We’re doing it exactly like we did the first movie.” Ortega shared his enthusiasm, telling a red carpet journalist: “Everyone did an incredible job. I felt so lucky to be there. It was insane [and] I can’t wait for people to see it.”

With several other films now in post-production, most of which she also served on as executive producer, Jenna is proving to be a take-charge kind of girl – and a fearless one at that. “I want to be able to really orchestrate my own future,” she declares. “I’ve even begged a little bit to be allowed to make a mistake because how can I learn if I don’t do that for myself? I can’t be scared of the fact that I might fall on my face.” ■

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON, BEST OF BURTON BY JAMIE TABBERER

DANNY SHOOTS, HE SCORES!

When it comes to his soundtracks, Tim Burton usually calls upon composer Danny Elfman to work his magic. And that’s exactly what it is – magic, from dark and brooding in the *Batman* movies to light but heartwrenching in *Edward Scissorhands*. Here, we revisit some of Elfman’s most glorious soundtracks…

SLEEPY HOLLOW (1999)

MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE
Sleepy Hollow
MUSIC COMPOSED
BY DANNY ELFMAN

Tim Burton. Danny Elfman. Gothic horror. Honestly, name a more iconic trio. *Sleepy Hollow* is dripping with spooky drama, eerie choirs and symphonic thunder. It’s dark, delicious and feels like Elfman flexing all his Halloween-season muscles.

PLANET OF THE APES (2001)

Unpopular opinion alert: Tim Burton’s *Planet Of The Apes* actually slaps. And Elfman’s score? Criminally underrated. All pounding percussion, wild instrumentation, and sci-fi swagger, it’s basically a gym workout for your ears.

BEETLEJUICE (1987)

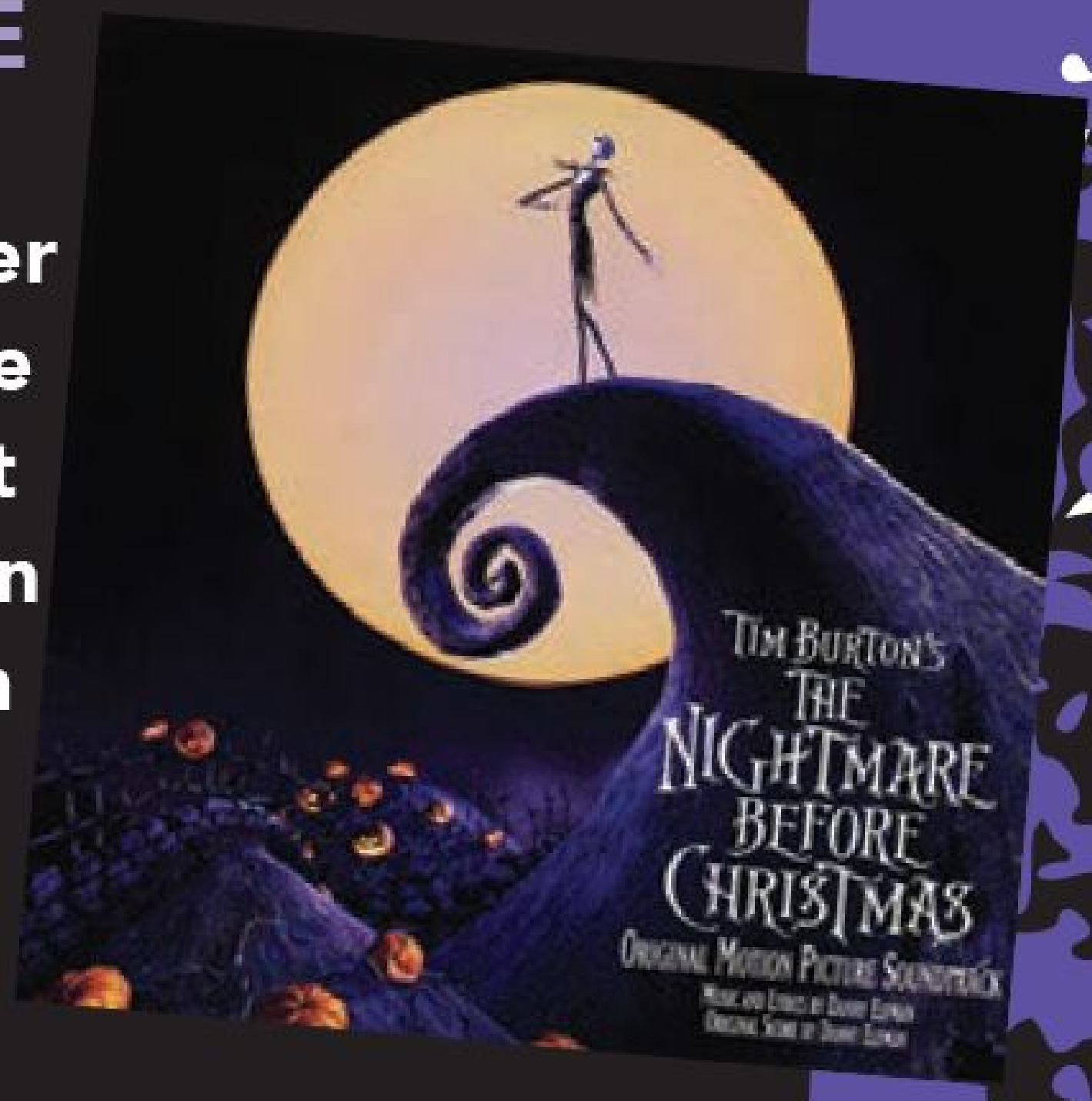
BEETLEJUICE
ORIGINAL MUSIC by DANNY ELFMAN

Peak Elfman chaos, as madcap and bananas as the film itself – circus vibes, bonkers rhythms and that classic Elfman wink. And yes, we know Harry Belafonte’s tracks steal the spotlight sometimes, but Elfman’s quirky, carnival-gone-wrong score is the real MVP.

BATMAN (1989) & BATMAN RETURNS (1992)

Why choose between these two? You can’t. The OG *Batman* theme is pure goth blockbuster brilliance (and almost didn’t happen thanks to some Prince drama – Google it). By *Batman Returns*, Elfman was basically king of the night, doubling down on the dark whimsy and giving us a sequel score that’s even more extra.

THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS (1993)



An Elfman magnum opus if ever there was one. Not only did he score this goth-girl staple, but he wrote all the songs and even sang as Jack Skellington. From *This Is Halloween* to *What’s This?*, it’s camp, it’s spooky, it’s timeless.

EDWARD SCISSORHANDS (1990)

This hits us straight in the feels. Elfman’s most heartbreakingly beautiful score is delicate, sweet and tinged with sadness. It’s all swirling waltzes, music-box melodies and a choir that makes you want to weep into your lace gloves. Pure magic.

WINONA TAKES IT ALL

THE ACCLAIMED ACTRESS HAS WORKED WITH *WEDNESDAY* DIRECTOR TIM BURTON AND ITS STAR JENNA ORTEGA, AND IS FULL OF PRAISE FOR THEM BOTH

They've only made four films together, yet Winona Ryder and Tim Burton are a match made in movie heaven – a pair of quirky and idiosyncratic icons united, back when he first cast her in *Beetlejuice* in 1998, by a mutual weirdness and a way of seeing the world through different eyes.

Having subsequently worked with the director on *Edward Scissorhands*, *Frankenweenie* and last year's *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice*, Ryder gave a speech at Burton's long-overdue Hollywood Walk of Fame induction ceremony last September and told him: "Tim, your friendship has been such an enormous gift. When I met you I was a weird kid."

Ryder was a teenager when she first played goth girl supreme Lydia Deetz in *Beetlejuice* and 52 when she spoke at the ceremony, prompting Burton to jest good-naturedly: "Now you're a weird adult."

Bullied at school because of her androgynous appearance, and dyeing her naturally blonde hair blue or purple around the age of 11 to further stand out, she didn't fit in and found a kindred spirit in Burton, who she further praised with: "You reinforced my confidence to be myself, to go against the tides of conformity... You made being a weird girl not just okay but something to celebrate and even kind of cool. You've carried that torch for us weirdos, making us all feel seen and valued."

In their first collaboration, her ghost-seeing Lydia Deetz describes herself as strange and unusual, prompting Ryder to tell an interviewer on the *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice* promotional tour that Burton "knows the heartache of the misunderstood, the strange and unusual". Tim, she said, didn't just understand them: "He celebrates them, whether outcasts, oddballs, terrifying or hilarious. He gives ▶

them depth, humour and always a certain gallantry. And he gives them their dignity. His heroes are the very outcasts that he loves."

When she first met Burton they chatted about movies and music, with Ryder recalling: "I had no idea at that age that a director could be, like, someone I could sort of hang out with." She saw him as a kindred spirit, no matter the age gap, and he knew he'd found his Lydia.

The director has defined himself as "a tortured outcast". He didn't dye his hair vivid colours but he did let it grow wild and unruly, not unlike the mane sported by Johnny Depp (Winona's boyfriend at the time of the film's release) in *Edward Scissorhands*. In the 1990 gothic fantasy, Ryder went back to blonde to play Kim Boggs, whose mother discovers a manmade boy with scissors instead of fingers and kindly invites him into the family home.

Like her mother, Kim is a kind-hearted girl who goes against the grain of her peers by treating Edward with kindness, not horror. Young love blossoms but Edward is another of Burton's outcasts, driven out of town when the locals turn against him.

Tim and Winona's third collaboration was 2012's *Frankenweenie*, a stop-motion feature about – yes, you've guessed it – a school-age outcast in the form of Victor Frankenstein, who literary legend tells us will go on to reanimate a monster cobbled together from human bits and pieces.

In Burton's prequel of sorts, Victor gets in some early practice by bringing his pet dog Sparky back to life after the latter is killed in a car accident. Winona voiced the character of Elsa Van Helsing, Victor's classmate and neighbour who again treats him with kindness, not contempt.

Since their first time working together, Winona had gone on to become a Hollywood A-lister and Oscar nominee for *The Age Of Innocence* and *Little Women*. After a while in the Hollywood wilderness, she made a comeback as the star of *Stranger Things* but always held *Beetlejuice* close to her heart. "That's one of those movies where little kids stop me," she says. "I'm so associated with it. I think it gave me my career."

She and Tim would often talk in private over the years about doing a sequel, although when it finally came to fruition she hadn't envisioned

"To work with Tim Burton is like being invited to wander through his heart and imagination"

"You've carried the torch for us weirdos," Winona told Tim Burton

Winona and her *Edward Scissorhands* co-star Johnny Depp at the film's premiere in Westwood, California

Winona with her on-screen daughter, played by Jenna Ortega, in *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice*

Sharing the screen with Michael Keaton in *Beetlejuice*

the same future for Lydia that the director and his screenwriters Alfred Gough and Miles Millar had. She never saw herself as a mum to teenage daughter Astrid Deetz, played by Jenna Ortega. "I never thought about Lydia ever being a mom. I thought she would just be this spinster by choice in that attic, but I think that's where the incredible Jenna Ortega comes in."

Ortega counts herself among the many who idolise Lydia as a screen icon. "For me, Lydia is the coolest ever. So then to play her daughter and also have to be like 'Mom…' and roll your eyes was definitely more challenging for me as an actor but super fun to play."

And Jenna gushed about Winona, saying: "Winona is just the loveliest, sweetest, just one of my favourite people I think I've ever met. I love her a lot and I felt really grateful to get to know her and work with her. She is just an angel on this planet."

Beetlejuice Beetlejuice was one of the biggest hits in either of their careers, so you can bet your box office dollar that Winona would work with Tim again in a heartbeat, should the right project materialise. "To work with Tim," she says, "is like being invited to wander through his heart and imagination. It's the ultimate cathedral and one of my most cherished and sacred places to be."

For his part, Burton was won over by Ryder at that very first meeting. "When I met Winona, she reminded me of how I felt as a teenager. And she's got what I love with certain actors. She can say something with just her eyes. There's a soul coming out, so without dialogue, without anything, there's something there. It's why you make movies." ■

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON

WINONA'S SIGNATURE ROLES

LYDIA DEETZ IN *BEETLEJUICE* (1988)

The role that started it all – a goth gal for the ages. With her jet black hair, jet black clothes, dark eye make-up and a dark sense of humour, Lydia is actually the big screen's OG goth icon. Her father and stepmum may be fazed by the supernatural slob who's landed in their lives, but Lydia sure isn't. Grieving for her late mother and fascinated by the afterlife, she proves more than a match for the ghastly ghoul, with an outlook that goes: "Live people ignore the strange and unusual. I myself am strange and unusual."

VERONICA SAWYER IN *HEATHERS* (1989)

Just as Lydia Deetz won't be intimidated by the undead, Veronica Swayer won't be bullied by the dead-behind-the-eyes entitled bitches who rule the roost at Westerburg High School. At first she's drawn in by them, but then she and her bad-boy boyf JD (Christian Slater, oozing nonchalant cool) plot to bring down the clique. When he goes way too far she refuses to be Bonnie to his Clyde, fakes her own suicide and emerges from the aftermath of JD's twisted scheme to blow up the school covered in filth and still looking amazing.

MINA MURRAY IN *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* (1992)

In Francis Ford Coppola's blood-soaked, bats**t-crazy adaptation of the oft-filmed Bram Stoker novel, Ryder is the beautiful and poised object of the Count's deranged affections. It's a fever dream of a movie but this time, as schoolmistress Wilhelmina "Mina" Murray, she is out of goth gear and trussed up in Victorian-era finery. She's so gorgeous it's easy to see why Dracula is besotted with her, and her English accent is so impeccable she should have given lessons to her co-star Keanu Reeves, whose mangling of the accent is a worse atrocity than any committed by Gary Oldman's vampire.

LELAINA PIERCE IN *REALITY BITES* (1994)

With fashionably short hair, casual T-shirts, a cigarette seldom out of her hands and a Big Gulp from the 7/11 store always on the go, Lelaina Pierce is a '90s girl through and through – flatsharing with friends to keep costs down, stuck in a job on a local morning show that she hopes will one day lead to her realising her dream of becoming a documentary filmmaker, torn between successful businessman Michael (Ben Stiller) and scruffy couch-surfing musician Troy (Ethan Hawke). "I was really going to be someone by the time I was 23," she laments, such a lovely combination of regret and optimism that it's easy to see why she's in romantic demand.

JOYCE BYERS IN *STRANGER THINGS* (2016 ONWARDS)

Having proved her acting chops in *The Age Of Innocence* and *Girl, Interrupted* and got in on the action in *Alien: Resurrection*, Ryder floundered a bit in the late '90s, throughout the noughties and the first half of the 2010s while negotiating some personal issues. Career salvation came in the form of fiercely protective single mum Joyce Byers in Netflix's *Stranger Things*, who'll stop at nothing to find her son Will after he goes missing. With the fifth and final season due out this year, we can't wait to see what Winona will do next.

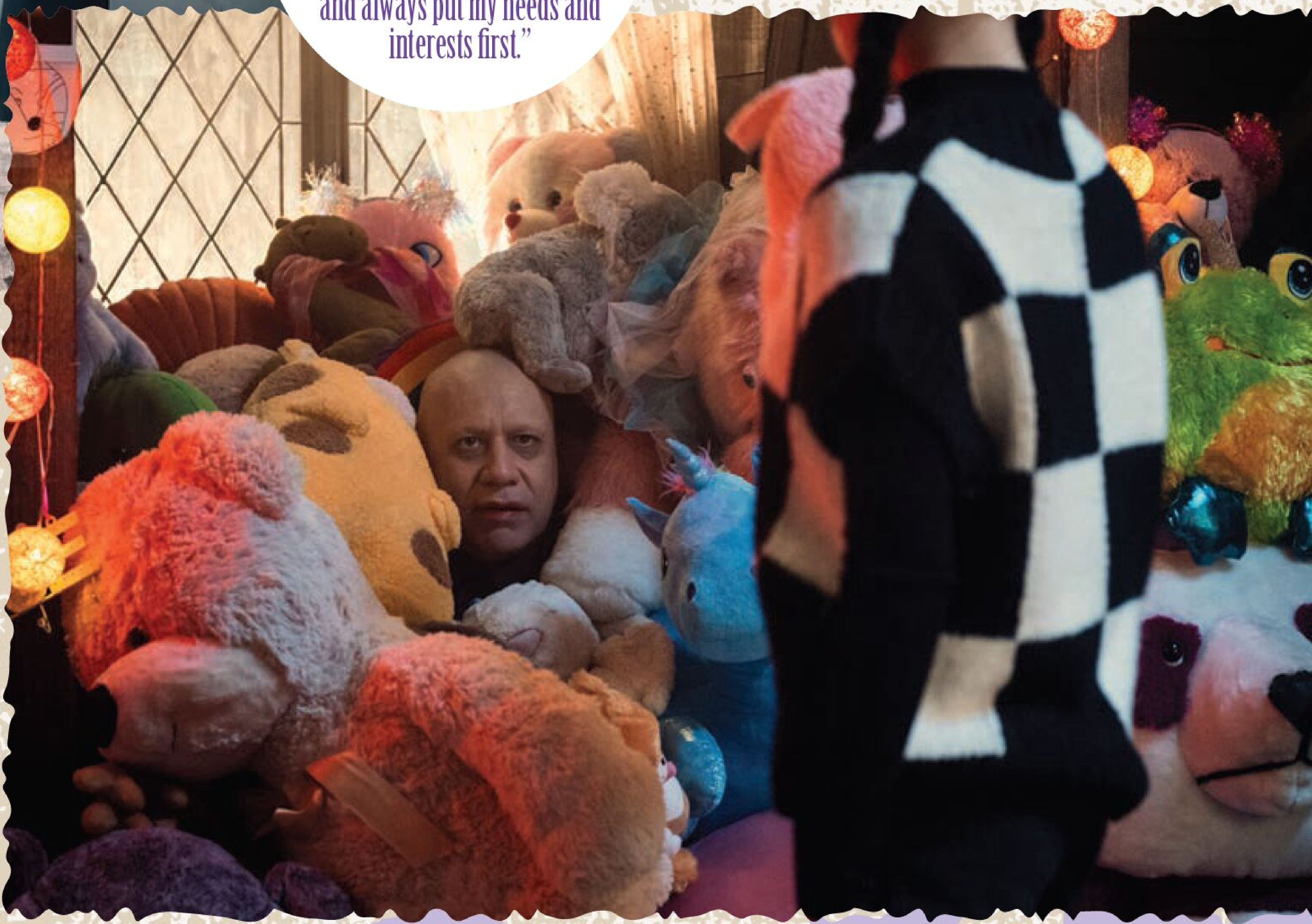
CHAPTER 7

IF YOU DON'T WOE ME BY NOW

Wednesday gets a visitor who sheds light on the monster, but it's not long before it claims another victim

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"I'm not friend material, let alone more-than-friend material. I will ignore you, stomp on your heart and always put my needs and interests first."



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

At Mayor Walker's funeral, Wednesday muses that she's getting close to the truth. Someone is watching her but it turns out to be her Uncle Fester. He's checking in on her. He also needs to lay low for a couple of days, so she hides him in Eugene's bee farm. When she shows him a drawing of the creature, he informs her that it's a Hyde and advises her to check out Nevermore founder Nathaniel Faulkner's diary in the Nightshade library.

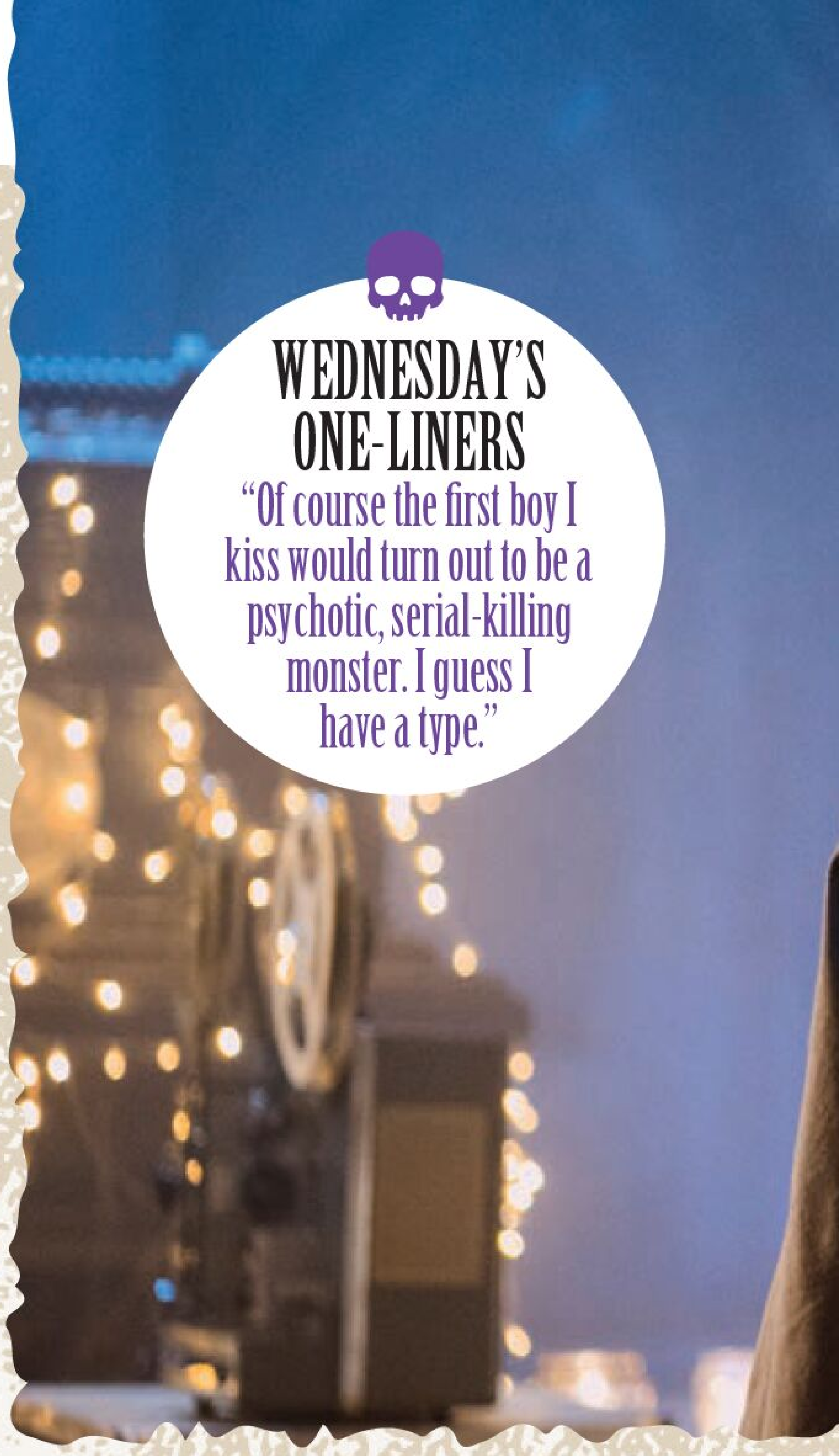
VOTED BEST IN BOSTON!
PENNY'S POOCH
DOOR-TO
DOG WA

FUNNIEST BIT...

Wednesday and Fester racing through the woods on a motorbike and sidecar, sporting polka-dotted helmets and oversized goggles, as groovy music plays on the soundtrack.

Working on her novel, Wednesday ponders the death of Garrett's sister Laurel Gates and her connection to the Hyde. That night, she sneaks into the library expecting to meet Fester but instead finds Xavier – who insists he's been on her side since day one, and literally saved her life. But as she points out: "Every time the monster has attacked, you have been right there. Then there's your drawing obsession. You have drawn the monster dozens of times, and yet you have never seen it – or so you claim." Xavier counters with: "If I am the monster then why haven't I killed you?" before striding out.

Wednesday, Fester (who has been lurking in the shadows) and Thing crack open the library's secret safe. Faulkner's diary fills them in on Hyde lore. Said creatures carry a mutation that is unleashed when the Hyde is ▶



WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"Of course the first boy I kiss would turn out to be a psychotic, serial-killing monster. I guess I have a type."

BEHIND THE SCENES

traumatised, medicated or hypnotised. Once the Hyde materialises, it will do whatever its master wants.

Miss Thornhill pushes Wednesday to admit she misses Enid, but she's having none of it. She and Fester track Xavier into the woods, where he hops into Dr Kinbott's car. Back in Weems' office, Wednesday tells the Principal and Kinbott that she'd be open to hypnotherapy as part of her assimilation. Then at the coffee shop, she tells Fester she believes Kinbott is master (or mistress) to Xavier's monster and that the therapist is using hypnotherapy to unleash him.

Tyler and Wednesday are about to snog on a date at Crackstone's crypt when Sheriff Galpin turns

SCARIEST BIT....

The monster appears from out of nowhere and attacks Dr Kinbott. So much for Wednesday's theory that the monster has been doing her bidding, right?

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON; PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX

up. He's looking for a bank robber, aka Uncle Fester, who he thinks is hiding out there and orders them to leave. Returning to her dorm room, Wednesday discovers that it has been overturned, Faulkner's diary is gone and Thing has been stabbed to death. Fester electric-shocks Thing back to life and Wednesday is out for revenge, as she warns her uncle that the police are after him and he agrees to leave.

Weems knows all about the Hyde monster, but she won't let Sheriff Galpin in on the truth as it would mean the end of Nevermore. Meanwhile, Bianca and Lucas have discovered that Mayor Walker was looking into the murder of Laurel Gates, who was presumed drowned, her body never recovered. The mansion was bought by an elderly heiress who died and gifted her fortune to Teresa L Glau – aka an anagram of Laurel Gates.

Laurel, the trio conclude, bought her old house and has returned to Jericho as someone else, seeking revenge for those she feels wronged her brother. Wednesday accuses Dr Kinbott of being Laurel under a new guise, but the therapist is subsequently killed by the beast.

At Xavier's art studio, Wednesday finds Rowan's inhaler, Eugene's glasses, photos of Wednesday, Kinbott's necklace and a painting of her being murdered. As he is arrested, Xavier reckons he's been framed.

Enid moves back in and says Wednesday belongs with Tyler. But when she and Tyler finally kiss, she has another vision. Xavier isn't the monster, Tyler is! ■

DID YOU KNOW?

* When Tyler asks Wednesday: "How do you feel about scary movies?" he's referring to the *Scream* franchise that Ortega appeared in.

* In a previous episode it was said that Garrett's sister Laurel died 25 years ago, but in this one apparently it was 20 years ago.

* Another gaffe – when Weems is chatting to Wednesday in her office she's leaning against the left side of the fireplace, then in the next shot she's on the right!

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"I enjoy funerals. I've been crashing them since I was old enough to read the obituary section."

SCREAM, SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN!

JENNA ORTEGA WAS THE PERFECT ADDITION TO THE SUCCESSFUL *SCREAM* FRANCHISE

Jenna shared the screen with Melissa Berrera in *Scream and Scream VI*

Ghostface's identity was kept secret from Jenna and the rest of the cast

> “Because you never know who's under that mask, it's the most eerie feeling”

The original *Scream* was one of the first horror movies that self-confessed “big scaredy cat” Jenna Ortega watched, when she was aged 14. Released in 1996, the slasher franchise's first instalment instigated the meta concept of having characters comment on the history of the genre as they fell prey to its conventions and clichés in the most violent of ways.

Jenna was hooked, devouring all four entries in the Wes Craven-directed series before, in August 2020, it was confirmed she'd be appearing in a fifth film. It would be named simply *Scream* in honour of the groundbreaking original, with Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett co-directing, following Craven's death five years earlier.

The teenager who declared “I'm definitely the actress who's like ‘more blood'” was leaving her Disney Channel image way behind her in the franchise's goriest movie, and was thrilled at the prospect. “I never, ever thought that I would be able or even given the opportunity to say that I'm a part of the *Scream* franchise, which is just kind of like a huge, mind-blowing moment for me,” she practically screamed, “and I still almost don't believe it's real.”

Speaking on location in Wilmington, North Carolina, when filming began that September – four months later than planned, because of the pandemic – she added: “I still walk on set or interact with the cast and I'm eternally grateful to be here. And especially as somebody who is a big fan of horror and loves to shoot horror and thinks it's the most fun genre to possibly shoot, it's everything I could ever hope for and more. So I really just am trying to take this all in because I don't know when something this cool will happen again.”

Her brother had dressed up as the Ghostface killer one Halloween and she'd seen all the previous movies, so Jenna wasn't spooked when she first stepped onto the set. But not knowing who was in the black cloak, wielding a knife and wearing the iconic mask did freak her out. The directors deliberately keep the identity of the killer – or rather killers, as one of the *Scream* conventions is usually to have more than one – secret so that the actors would be as terrified as the audience, with Ortega admitting: “Because you never know who's under that mask, it's the most eerie, uneasy feeling.”

She felt it was a wise move on the filmmakers' part: “It definitely keeps everybody on their toes, but it's also just that weird moment of you're surrounded by actors, so literally anybody could be lying. It's like: ‘Oh, hi, do you know who the killer is?' We all get along so well but then as soon as you get on that topic everybody turns so awkward and starts to isolate themselves.”

Comedy slasher film *The Babysitter: Killer Queen* – in which Jenna played a high school girl named Phoebe Atwell, who helps her boyfriend battle a satanic cult – dropped on Netflix just as *Scream* went into production. Ignoring the mostly negative reviews, she said: “I just think it's the most zany, hilarious thing and I had such a great time shooting it, which was nice too because that was my first real step into horror comedy.”

She was excited to go from *The Babysitter* to “something so iconic and also in the same realms and [which] has the same veins” with the *Scream* reboot. Of the former, she felt: “It's funny, it's meta, it's self-aware, but then there's also some actually scary, intimidating moments. It's just the coolest thing in the world. I'm proud of *Babysitter* and I truly believe that it kind of helped me get in the mindset to somewhat prepare myself for this project.”

Starting work on the first *Scream* film in nearly a decade, Jenna beamed: “I don't even think there are words in the English language to correctly express how happy, excited and nervous I am for this journey.”

The directors admired her ability to play both horror and comedy, not to mention the fact she had a great scream herself. She needed it. In the terrifying opening scene, the character of Tara Carpenter is brutally attacked, then when she's recovering in hospital from ▶

Jenna on screen
as Tara Carpenter

SCREAMOGRAPHY!

Almost a decade after the '80s heyday of slasher flicks, *Dawson's Creek* writer Kevin Williamson dreamed up a fresh new slasher franchise, with a soon-to-be-iconic masked killer nicknamed Ghostface and a much more satirical, self-referential tone.

SCREAM (1996)

PLOT: Sidney Prescott (Neve Campbell) and her school friends are being terrorised by a wise-cracking horror-movie obsessed killer. News reporter Gale Weathers (Courteney Cox) and dopey cop Dewey Riley (David Arquette) are on hand to try to catch the killer. It emerges that the killings are in some way related to the murder of Sidney's mother a year before.
OPENING SEQUENCE: This first movie set up the now iconic pre-titles scene. Drew Barrymore plays Casey, who's quizzed on the phone by Ghostface, stalked around her house and chased into the garden, where she is slaughtered and hung from a tree!
MOST OUTLANDISH KILLING: Tatum Reilly (Rose McGowan) has her head crushed in a garage door mechanism when she tries to flee the killer by squeezing through a cat flap.
KILLER REVEAL: Ooh, two killers for the price of one! We didn't see that coming. Or did we?

SCREAM 2 (1997)

The One Where Randy Dies!

PLOT: Sidney Prescott (Neve Campbell) tries to put her horrific summer behind her by heading to uni. But no sooner has she settled in than Ghostface is back on the rampage, hacking away at her college mates.
OPENING SEQUENCE: Maureen (Jada Pinkett Smith) and her boyfriend (Omar Epps) are horrifically murdered during a screening of *Stab*, the movie based on the events in Woodsboro.
MOST OUTLANDISH KILLING: Maureen's stabbing in front of a crowd of cinemagoers is pretty gruesome, though the off-screen slaughter of fan fave Randy Meeks (Jamie Kennedy) is most shocking. Least said about Jerry O'Connell's murder of The Partridge Family's *I Think I Love You*, the better.
KILLER REVEAL: A surprise duo, and both go a little Jack Nicholson!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 98

SCREAM 3 (2000)

Ghostface Goes To Hollywood

PLOT: Death comes to the set of *Stab 3* as another copycat Ghostface slices and dices his way through Hollywood. Sort of! All the surviving characters are back and the comedy quotient is ramped up to the max, making this the most rib-tickling of the series, though least popular with die-hard fans. Also, Sidney's mum appears in visions, which does let the film down a bit.

OPENING SEQUENCE: Cotton Weary (Liev Schreiber), the man exonerated for the murder of Sidney's mum in the first flick, is now a successful talk show host. While stuck in traffic, Ghostface calls to tell him that he is watching his girlfriend. Cotton dashes home, only to be savagely stabbed to death as he comes to the rescue.

MOST OUTLANDISH KILLING: The killings weren't particularly spectacular, but the gas explosion that killed off actor Tom Prinze (Matt Keeslar) was a spectacle.

KILLER REVEAL: This time a solo killer with a surprise family connection.

SCREAM 4 (2011)

The One With The Shock Twist That Never Happened

PLOT: Ten years after Sidney's last brush with Ghostface, she is on the promotional trail for her book that details her terrifying experiences. When she returns to Woodsboro, she is shocked to find that her niece Jill (Emma Roberts) and her friends are being stalked by a new rebooted Ghostface.

OPENING SEQUENCE: Playing on fans' expectations of a cold-blooded murder, the *Scream 4* opener tricked them with a double film-within-a-film bluff, one of them featuring Anna Paquin (Anna Paquin)!

MOST OUTLANDISH KILLING: Olivia's (Marielle Jaffe) gut-ripping brutal attack in her bedroom.

KILLER REVEAL: Big shock, especially when you consider the original idea was for the killer to return in future instalments having got away with murder.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 101

"There's a lot of tension between Tara and Sam," Jenna says of the sisters' relationship

multiple stab wounds she's attacked again. But she's no schoolgirl victim; in the blood-drenched finale she proves to be a real badass determined to defend her older sister Sam (Melissa Barrera).

During the short two-month shoot, the production was shrouded in secrecy to avoid spoilers, and the actors were under pressure to remain tight-lipped about the many surprises and plot twists. "I've never been so scared to say something I shouldn't," Jenna confessed. "I feel like anything that I say gets twisted and turned into something that it's not. I've done interviews where I think I've played it really safe and smart and honestly have said nothing, but people think I gave away something major and they start to make you believe that, like, oh man, maybe I did."

Returning to the fictional California town of Woodsboro were legacy stars Neve Campbell as Ghostface survivor Sidney Prescott, Courteney Cox as reporter Gale Weathers and David Arquette as Sheriff Dewey Riley. Ortega was starstruck to be sharing the screen with them: "I remember seeing Neve, Courteney and David together for the first time and I think I said three words the entire time because I didn't want to look like a fool. I was really intimidated. It made it feel like it really was *Scream*, you know? They are the franchise."

She loved being able to chat with some of her acting idols about some of her favourite horror films, although thankfully they usually started the conversations themselves. "They've definitely offered their own stories and any

conversation that we've had they've been the one to bring it up," Jenna was pleased to report from the set. "I'm nervous to pry because I'm like: 'Oh my God, I've literally been studying these films and now they're in front of me and I don't want to be that annoying,' like: 'Oh, so what was it like when you shot this?' But I think it's kind of organically come up in conversation where they might reference a past experience on set."

Scream and indie drama *The Fallout* both came out in January 2022 (after the latter premiered at the South by Southwest festival the previous March) and Ortega bigged up both of them. Of *The Fallout* she said: "The script is incredibly special to me. I love that it's the director Megan Park's feature film debut; she wrote the script in literally two weeks. The dialogue and series of events are all so natural and so grounded in Gen Z culture."

She was even more enthusiastic about *Scream*, revealing: "It's the best experience I've ever had on a set. It's a continuation of the story. We're not trying to redo anything; we're just trying to expand the world and introduce it to an audience that may not be so familiar, and also give some newfound excitement and a new look at the original characters for fans of the franchise."

Jenna revealed she was unbelievably excited to join the *Scream* franchise

> "It's a continuation of the story. We're not trying to redo anything"

Critics were kind to *The Fallout* but it was shown on HBO Max in the States (where it was the number one streamed film the week it was released) and went on limited release elsewhere, hardly setting the box office alight. *Scream*, on the other hand, was a smash – knocking *Spider-Man: No Way Home* off the top spot in the US and bringing in nearly $140 million worldwide against a budget of $24 million.

The reviews were mixed but the performances were praised and franchise fans loved it. Ortega won Most Frightened Performance at the MTV Movie & TV Awards, proving that the directors were right to cast her because she gave good screams among other things, and was shortlisted for Best Supporting Performance at the Fangoria Chainsaw Awards.

As the big screen's new scream queen, Ortega next played a doomed heavy metal drummer alongside the Foo Fighters in the instantly forgotten *Studio 666* (2022). She took a week off from making *The Fallout* because she's a massive fan of Dave Grohl and co. The film may have bombed… "But I got to meet everybody [in the band]. I got to do the screaming, crying thing and it was a dream," she recalled.

She was then second-billed behind Mia Goth in Ti West's slasher flick *X* as a character named Lorraine, who she described as "a conservative southern Christian girl who's thrown into an adult film production and it's kind of jarring and exciting for her". The script, Ortega noted, was "the most outrageous thing I've ever read" and she fangirled out about sharing screen time with Scott Mescudi aka Kid Cudi: "I was a huge fan of his music and I tried not to make a big deal about that. Also, I'd never seen him act before, so I was pleasantly surprised. He plays a real badass character." ▶

BLACKMORE UNIVERSITY

Jenna on screen in *Scream VI* with Melissa Barrera, Jasmin Savoy Brown and Mason Gooding

Can Tara and her friends escape Ghostface?

"I have so much respect for the franchise that I didn't want to do it wrong"

"She feels as though she's too protective," Jenna says of Tara's thoughts about sister Sam

The well-reviewed scarefest was filmed in February and March 2021 and a couple of months later Jenna was cast as Wednesday Addams in the *Wednesday* TV series, which you can read all about elsewhere in this issue. *X* was released in 2022, as was the horror comedy *American Carnage*, in which Jenna played a volunteer at a sinister nursing home.

Once filming of the first season of *Wednesday* wrapped, she was back in *Scream* land for *Scream VI*. A direct sequel to the previous movie, it saw Tara fleeing Woodsboro for college in New York, with sister Sam coming along to keep an eye on her.

"At the top of the film we see my character Tara avoiding her trauma and desperately trying to reclaim her teenage experience and become a normal college student," Ortega revealed during production in Canada, with Montreal standing in for NYC. "There's a lot of tension between her and Sam. She feels as though she's too protective and unwilling to allow them both to move on. She feels suffocated."

And guess what? There's a new Ghostface in town (or rather Ghostfaces plural, because after all this is a *Scream* film) out to get Tara, Sam and their friends.

The shoot was "a lot more intense" this time around because Tara got in on more of the action. "In the last one, I was screaming and crying the entire time. This time I actually had to create a personality for her. I actually had to decide: 'What does she wear? What's her favourite colour? How does she wear her make-up? What's her sense of humour?'"

Secrecy surrounding the identity of Ghostface in *Scream VI* was even more strictly enforced than last time by directors Bettinelli-Olpin and Gillett. Cast members were given scripts with pages missing or ones they never ended up filming. "Sometimes they give us different scripts, different endings," Ortega told chat show host Jimmy Fallon. "This time around they just didn't give us the third act at all."

Star of the fourth *Scream* Hayden Panettiere reprised her role as

"I wanted to do it justice," Jenna revealed of the *Scream* franchise

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON; SCREAMOGRAPHY BY CHRISTIAN GUILTENANE

terrorised Kirby Reed, who was now working for the FBI, but Neve Campbell declined to return because she wasn't happy with the salary the producers were offering her. Jenna was diplomatic when asked about Campbell's absence. "There's so much going on in this one and it's so action-heavy and so gore-heavy that I think you're gonna be almost distracted," she told one interviewer. "But obviously, we respect her and want the best for her. She's missed and thought of." In another interview she said: "It was really unfortunate, especially because Neve is the coolest, sweetest, most talented lady. The franchise wouldn't be what it is without her."

Fans of the franchise still turned out in huge numbers to see the sixth instalment, which was budgeted at around $35 million and brought in nearly $170 million at the worldwide box office. *Empire* magazine felt that while it had one of the sillier plots from all six movies it was "far more inventive and entertaining than most horror franchises of a similar vintage".

A seventh *Scream* film is currently in the planning stages, albeit without Jenna. Conflicts with her *Wednesday* schedule and, like Campbell, disputes over pay mean she'll no longer be stalked by Ghostface. But the actress who said after the fifth film wrapped "I have so much respect for the franchise that I didn't want to do it wrong – I wanted to do it justice" loved her time as Tara Carpenter.

During the making of the 2022 movie she turned 18 and the cast and crew threw her a surprise party: "They made such an effort to make me feel at home and special."

And if Tara has been stalked by Ghostface for the last time, Ortega hinted that she's not done with the horror genre, saying: "Horror sets are the most fun sets you'll ever be on. I feel like people who work on horror typically are fans of horror. They love it. They live for it. They have all the best film references. It's pure entertainment. You're not trying to overly impress anybody. You're just trying to give people a good time." ■

SCREAM (2022)

The Reboot aka The One Where Dewey Dies!

PLOT: Series reboot. Sisters Tara (Jenna Ortega) and Sam Carpenter (Melissa Barrera) find themselves in the sights of another Ghostface, seeking vengeance.

OPENING SEQUENCE: In homage to the classic opener of the first *Scream*, Tara is quizzed on a phone call by Ghostface and then chased around her house.

MOST OUTLANDISH KILLING: Amber's (Mikey Madison) death is pretty harsh – shot, burned and shot again. But Dewey's (David Arquette) shock murder packs the biggest emotional punch.

KILLER REVEAL: Ooh, retro nod to the first instalment. Clever.

SCREAM VI

Ghostface Takes New York

PLOT: Sam and Tara are studying in New York and a new Ghostface isn't far behind, only this time he, she or they are fans of the previous murderers and have built their own shrine.

OPENING SEQUENCE: Film professor Laura Crane (Samara Weaving) is slain in an alleyway by a Ghostface who then reveals himself (Tony Revolori). However, when he returns to his apartment he is killed by another mysterious Ghostface!

MOST OUTLANDISH KILLING: During an attack in her apartment, Anika (Devyn Nekoda) is stabbed in the gut and then plunges to her death when trying to escape between buildings on a ladder. Ethan's (Jack Champion) death – stabbed in the mouth – was also particularly brutal.

KILLER REVEAL: Not one, not two but three killers. Wow!

Catch the Scream films on Sky Movies.

SCREAM QUEENS SUPREME

FROM JANET LEIGH'S ICONIC SHOWER SCENE TO MIA GOTH'S ARTHOUSE NIGHTMARES, THESE HORROR HEROINES DIDN'T JUST SURVIVE – THEY REDEFINED HORROR WITH EVERY SCREAM

JAMIE LEE CURTIS

THE HALLOWEEN SERIES

Few characters are so enduring that the same star has portrayed them seven times across 44 years of cinema. Jamie Lee Curtis was just 20 when she first played innocent babysitter and OG final girl Laurie, foil to the emotionless, wordless serial killer Michael Myers in 1978's *Halloween*; she was 63, and the epitome of steely strength, upon *Halloween Ends* in 2022. Our favourite performances of hers is 1998's *Halloween H20: Twenty Years Later*, which rode the *Scream*-wave of stylish slashers but showed respect for Laurie by giving her depth. By making her a mother – not to mention a PTSD-suffering alcoholic headmistress – Jamie Lee was given more to do than just running scared, showcasing acting chops that would one day win her an Oscar for *Everything Everywhere All At Once*.

Jamie Lee Curtis first encountered Michael Myers in *Halloween* in 1978

Halloween H20: Twenty Years Later hit screens in 1998

The pair's most recent encounter was in 2022's *Halloween Ends*

Jamie Lee Curtis in *Halloween II* in 1981

JANET LEIGH

PSYCHO

Janet's culture-shaking performance as Marion Crane in 1960 classic *Psycho* makes her the mother of all scream queens. In a glorious structural, psychological bait-and-switch, director extraordinaire Alfred Hitchcock dedicates almost half of *Psycho* to Marion's skittish secretary stealing $40k from her employer, fleeing town and pulling up in mild-mannered Norman Bates's infamous motel. Her palpable paranoia, however, does little to prepare her (or an unsuspecting audience) for the threat so clearly promised in the film's title, and a shower scene so shocking, and a scream so blood-curdling, it's still being talked about 65 years later.

Janet Leigh took the most famous shower in cinema history (above) after encountering Norman Bates (above right)

HEATHER LANGENKAMP

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

Decades after *Psycho* exploded the genre and *Halloween* cemented its status (shout out, too, to Linda Blair and an Oscar-nominated Ellen Burstyn for *The Exorcist* in 1973), the by-now-bloated genre had descended into farce with inescapable franchises and one-note plots. (We're looking at you, *Friday The 13th*.) Robert Englund revolutionised the landscape as dream-hunting sadist Freddie Kruger, a child murderer burned alive by bereaved parents who takes revenge by killing teenagers in their sleep. He needed an effective counterpart, and Heather Langenkamp's smart, no-nonsense Nancy is a clear spiritual descendant of Laurie, and a forebear of the girls to come on this list.

Healther (left and right) played one of the teens haunted by Freddie (above right)

Neve and her co-stars changed the horror game in *Scream*

NEVE CAMPBELL

THE SCREAM SERIES

Drew Barrymore's early death in *Scream* flipped the "final girl" script on its head, killing the supposed star before the opening credits had finished; Rose McGowan's inventive death scene involving a cat flap proved just as memorable. But the heart and soul of this film, and the engine of the now seven-film-strong franchise, is the character Ghostface just can't kill: girl-next-door and symbol of survival Sidney Prescott, played expertly by Neve Campbell in all but one of the films. She'll return alongside Courteney Cox's battleaxe journalist Gail Weathers in *Scream 7* in 2026.

Neve Campbell as Sidney Prescott and Courteney Cox as Gale Weathers

JENNA ORTEGA

THE SCREAM SERIES

Jenna Ortega's introduction to the franchise in 2022's *Scream* flipped the script again, with viewers led to believe the almost unbearably sweet and innocent Tara is killed by Ghostface, à la Drew, in a satisfying cold open involving a (smart)home invasion. She survives, Sidney-style, and alongside Melissa Barrera's Sam, deepens the horror by adding emotional stakes as the two estranged sisters try to reconnect under immense pressure. Jenna's other spooky screen credits include *X*, *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice*, *You* and of course *Wednesday*.

Jenna joined the *Scream* franchise and found herself escaping Ghostface

Sarah Michelle Gellar in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* with David Boreanaz (above) and James Marsters (above right)

SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

What a genre veteran Sarah Michelle is. Not only did she turbocharge 144 episodes as the indestructible Buffy between 1997 and 2003, but she delivered a one-two punch in teen beauty queen vulnerability in 1997, first as Cici in *Scream 2* (she was the best thing about it) and as Helen in *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. (We still haven't recovered from that elongated chase sequence.) Her role as nerve-shredded care worker Karen in the comparatively restrained but no less disturbing *The Grudge* (2004) and *The Grudge 2* (2006) saw her working in a different key, and all these years later, she's still serving – in 2023, she starred in and executive produced supernatural horror series *Wolf Pack*.

MIA GOTH

MAXXXINE

Mia Goth is the undisputed queen of elevated horror; so much so, she's even played a horror actress in a very meta horror film – plucky porn star Maxine in 2024's glossily schlocky *MaXXXine*. Indeed, a huge swathe of her filmography is rooted in the genre (and she can't half pick 'em; almost all – including *Suspiria, High Life, X, Pearl* and *Infinity Pool* – have high ratings on Rotten Tomatoes) while even her unrelentingly gritty dramas – the arthouse indie series *Nymphomaniac*, for example – are horror-adjacent. She'll next be seen in Guillermo del Toro's hotly anticipated *Frankenstein* update.

Mia as actress Maxine in *MaXXXine*

FEATURE BY JAMIE TABBERER

CHAPTER 8

A MURDER OF WOES

There are confrontations galore before Wednesday solves a mystery… but still manages to leave us on a cliffhanger

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"You can't wake the dead. Believe me, I've tried."

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

In the woods (where else?) Wednesday tells Tyler she believes Dr Kinbott unlocked his Hyde side during one of their sessions, before she and the Nevermore clan kidnap him and chain him to a chair in Xavier's studio. He insists he's a normie but she says that his father married an outcast who was also a Hyde and passed on the condition.

She tortures him anyway, which is too much for the others. They run to Principal Weems, who calls up Sheriff Galpin and Wednesday

FUNNIEST BIT...

Enid learns that her boyf is a member of the secret Nightshades society and that he didn't tell her because, er, it's a secret. When they double-snap their fingers, she reacts with: "Seriously? A secret snap too?"

is placed under arrest. But Galpin (who has been listening to Kinbott's tapes about his son's darker side) lets her go with one final warning.

When Tyler and Wednesday are alone, he fesses up to being the murderer and hints that she'll be his next victim. Weems is forced by the Sheriff to expel her. Before she's put on the next day's train out of Jericho, she visits Xavier in jail and tells him Tyler is really the Hyde. She wants his help but he refuses.

Wednesday and Enid share a sort-of-emotional farewell, before Weems allows Wednesday to visit Eugene in hospital. Finally awake, he says that when he was attacked he saw someone in red boots, like Miss Thornhill's. Wednesday confronts the teacher, telling her: "You can drop the act, Laurel. I should have known it was you – faking your death, securing a job at Nevermore, unlocking a Hyde." ▶

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"My very first stalker. Maybe this forced vacation will be more interesting than I imagined."

BEHIND THE SCENES

Thornhill refutes her "wild accusations" but Wednesday beats her at her own game, summoning Tyler, who the teacher has been controlling with plant-derived chemicals. Except it isn't Tyler, it's a shape-shifting Weems, to whom she's unwittingly just confessed her guilt. Thornhill poisons the Principal, then beats Wednesday unconscious with a shovel.

Eugene alerts Enid to the fact that Thornhill is the baddie, then leaps out of bed to rush to Wednesday's rescue. She's being held captive in Crackstone's crypt, where Thornhill reveals that her roots go back to Crackstone. Her family has remained committed to his mission to rid the

SCARIEST BIT....

Tyler's metaphorical claws are out as he asks Wednesday: "What does it feel like to lose?" He then confesses to the killings in horrible detail – "The sound of their screams, the panic in their eyes and a fear so primal I could taste it" – in a scene that sends shivers down the spine.

FEATURE BY SIMON BUTTON; PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX

DID YOU KNOW?

* Eugene's ringtone is very apt, since it's *Flight Of The Bumblebee* by classical composer Rimsky-Korsakov.

* Goof alert: In Weems' office a crew member can be seen reflected in a mirror.

* As for Weems herself, Gwendoline Christie teased that her character might not really be dead, but producers have said since that she definitely is.

world of outcasts, and she and Tyler have been collecting body parts so they can resurrect him. All they need now is Wednesday's blood.

Crackstone is reborn and stabs Wednesday in the stomach, after which he and Thornhill head for Nevermore to massacre the students. As the Nightshades assemble to save the outcasts, Goody Addams materialises to save Wednesday, telling her that the only way to vanquish Crackstone is to stab him in the heart.

Bianca uses her siren skills to evacuate the school while Enid finally transforms into a werewolf. Tyler morphs into the monster, determined to kill Wednesday, but the wolfed-out Enid attacks him. Sheriff Galpin discovers them mid-fight, before a seriously wounded Tyler morphs back into human form.

On campus, Xavier – having been set free by Thing – aims an arrow at Crackstone but Wednesday takes the hit instead. She is saved by Bianca, then in turn pierces Crackstone through the heart and destroys him. Thornhill rocks up with a gun but a swarm of Eugene's bees bring her down.

School's out earlier than planned. Wednesday's family come to collect her, as Xavier gifts her with a mobile phone. She opens it to find a bunch of photos from her "very first stalker" and notes that there are still loose ends that need to be tied up. "I know the suspense is killing you," Wednesday says in voiceover as season one comes to a cliffhanger close. ■

WEDNESDAY'S ONE-LINERS

"Enid, the mark you have left on me is indelible. Anytime I grow nauseous at the sight of a rainbow or hear a pop song that makes my ears bleed, I'll think of you."

WEDNESDAY'S VIRAL BLOODY MARY MOMENT

WEDNESDAY'S SCHOOL DANCE SCENE SAW THE SHOW TAKE SOCIAL MEDIA BY STORM!

When *Wednesday* debuted in November 2022, the supernatural series introduced a whole new generation to the spooky lore of the Addams Family. As well as dominating the Netflix viewership during its first week of release, earning an impressive 341.2 million hours of streams, *Wednesday* went on to birth an unexpected viral moment tied to a Lady Gaga deep cut.

The show follows Wednesday Addams during her years at the private Nevermore boarding school for otherworldly outcasts. In the episode Woe What A Night, directed by Tim Burton, Wednesday attends the school dance with Tyler Galpin (played by Hunter Doohan) where she busts some kooky moves to The Cramps' 1981 track *Goo Goo Muck*.

The scene quickly became a favourite among fans, which likely came as a relief to lead star Ortega, who had choreographed the now-viral dance just a few days before filming began. "Siouxsie Sioux, Bob Fosse's Rich Man's Frug, Lisa Loring, Lene Lovich, Denis Lavant and archival footage of goths dancing in clubs in the '80s helped me out on this one," Ortega previously wrote in a tweet outlining her inspirations behind the routine.

While already deemed a standout moment of the Netflix comedy-drama, with one reviewer declaring it "the moment the show becomes great", Ortega's Wednesday moves reached new heights of virality in late 2022 after one crafty TikToker edited the routine to the Lady Gaga *Born This Way* album track, *Bloody Mary*. The hugely popular edit went on to spark a viral TikTok trend, dubbed "the Wednesday challenge", that saw fans recreate the routine to Gaga's 2011 track – including Mother Monster herself. "Slay Wednesday," Gaga wrote on Twitter at the time. "You're welcome at Haus of Gaga anytime (and bring Thing with you, we love paws around here)."

As the song became a trending TikTok track in early 2023, *Bloody Mary* subsequently shot up the charts globally, reaching a new peak of 22 on the UK Singles Chart and 41 on the US Billboard Hot 100, more than a decade after its original release. The song's renewed appreciation didn't go unnoticed by Gaga, who gleefully reacted to *Bloody Mary*'s chart revival on TikTok. "Driving home from set and my song came on the radio," she wrote in a caption. "When your song from 2011 is a 2023 smash!"

Around this time, talk of a Mother Monster cameo in *Wednesday* season two began circulating online. Speaking on the Golden Globes red carpet in 2023, Ortega addressed the speculation. "I'm sure Netflix would love that," she said. "If Lady Gaga were to be a part, she and Wednesday would have to be two monsters that understand each other."

Rumours intensified when Netflix dropped a *Wednesday* chapter two teaser featuring *Bloody Mary* in January 2023, despite the song not being used in the show's first season.

More than a year later, Little Monsters rejoiced at the news that Gaga had indeed joined the cast of Wednesday season two opposite Ortega. "This is the perfect role for her," one fan declared online following the casting announcement. "Mother Monster is about to devour."

While details of her role were kept tightly under wraps, *Variety* reported in November 2024 that Gaga had gone to Ireland to join the show's production team, who originally wanted the singer to accept a "larger" part in the Netflix hit. However, Gaga's packed schedule reportedly got in the way, and the hitmaker instead opted for a smaller cameo role. Once filming had wrapped, Ortega gushed about working with the "unbelievably sweet" and "precious" Gaga on the set of season two, but remained coy about the singer's role in the show. "I'm not saying anything about her character," she told *Entertainment Tonight*. "Let her be incredible and amazing. She's great in the show and I don't think she's what people expect her to be."

While refusing to spill the tea about her co-star's cameo, Ortega did eventually tease that "there's definitely dances in the show", seemingly referring to Gaga's appearance. Will Gaga's musical roots be front and centre of her *Wednesday* cameo, and could another *Bloody Mary* moment be on the horizon? Fans will have to wait and see. ■

FEATURE BY SAM RAMSDEN

WEDNESDAY IN NUMBERS

660.4 MILLION

POSTS TO DATE ON TIKTOK'S "WEDNESDAY DANCE" PAGE

1

AMOUNT OF TIMES EDITH "WOLFS OUT" ON THE SHOW

THE NUMBER OF EPISODES OF SEASON ONE DIRECTED BY TIM BURTON

4

1 BILLION

VIEWING HOURS RACKED UP BY THE SHOW BY THE END OF 2022

33

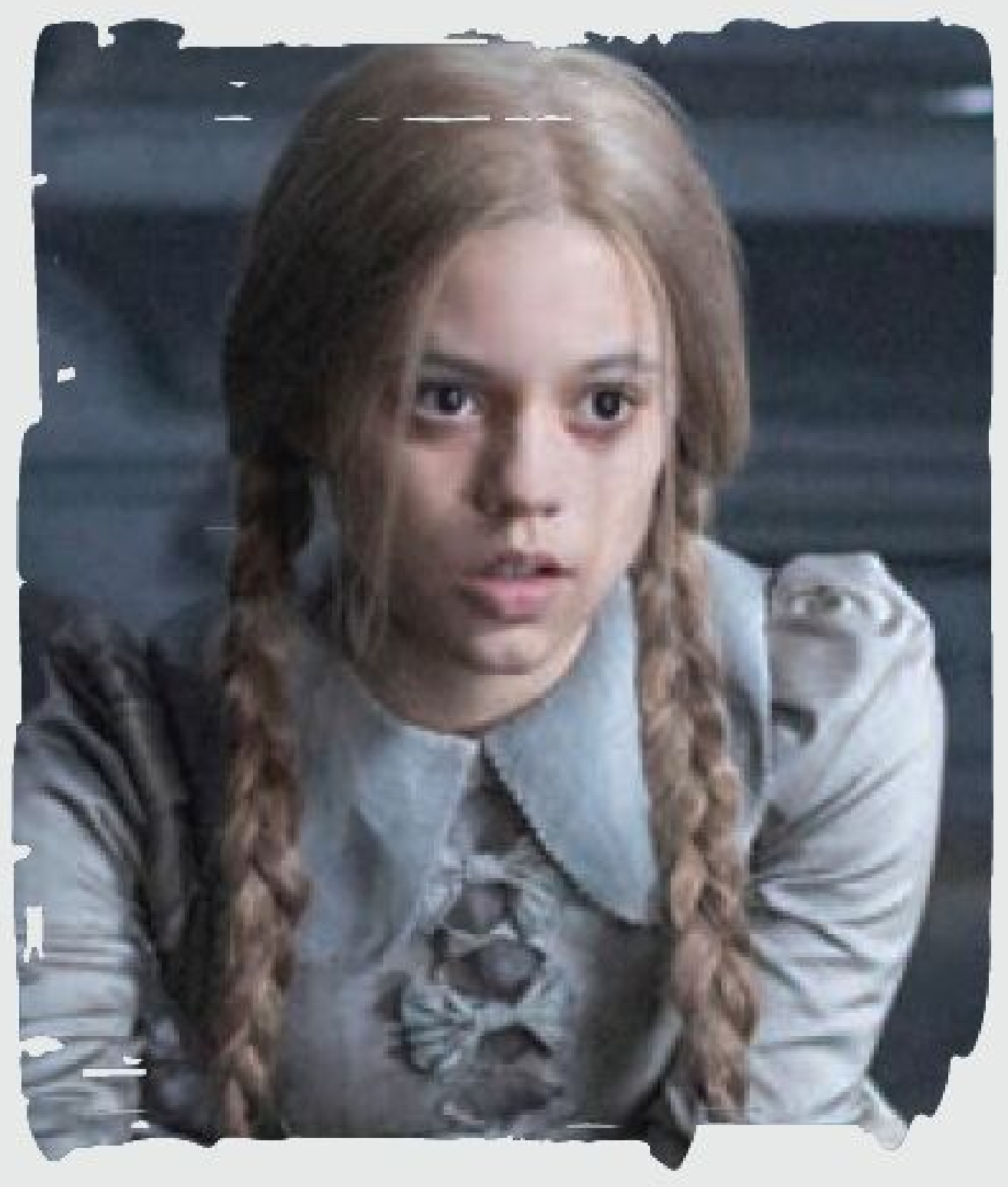
VICTIMS OF TYLER GALPIN (SO FAR!)

15

WEDNESDAY'S AGE WHEN WE FIRST MEET HER

2

NUMBER OF CHARACTERS JENNA ORTEGA PLAYS ON THE SHOW (WEDNESDAY AND GOODY ADDAMS)



COUNTRIES IN WHICH *WEDNESDAY* DEBUTED AT NUMBER ONE

83

HOW MANY ACTRESSES HAVE PLAYED WEDNESDAY ADDAMS ON FILM AND TV

7

73%

APPROVAL RATING FOR *WEDNESDAY* SEASON ONE ON ROTTEN TOMATOES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX

NETFLIX

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